

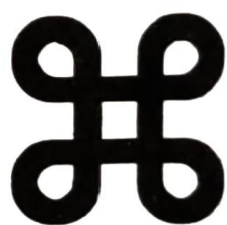


The National Way Forward!

Justin Barrett



The National Way Forward



Justin Barrett.

DEDICATION.

“For Baby X and others”.

“The Rebel”

*And I say to my people's masters: Beware!
Beware of the thing that is coming, beware of the risen people,
Who shall take what ye would not give.
Did ye think to conquer the people,
Or that Law was stronger than life and than men's desire to be free?
We will try it out with you, ye that have harried and held,
Ye that have bullied and bribed, tyrants, hypocrites, liars!*

P.H. Pearse.



The Guild Press,

**Springtown, Granard,
County Longford,
Ireland.**

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Preface.

A human being is a remarkable thing, one might even say a thing of mystery, though there is a tendency to overlook this fact in daily life because this remarkable thing is, at the same time, remarkably numerous. The mystery of the human being lies in the fact that it is the meeting point of many opposites, thereby making paradox a way of life. The human being is rational and irrational; the human being is spiritual, but also material; the human being combines great creativity with a power for awesome destruction; and the human being also weds practical commonsense to a tremendous capacity for delusion. It is this latter quality, which seems to have taken on a dominant role in Irish society in the last decade or so.

From the moment that it was pronounced that Ireland was officially “a Celtic Tiger”, vast numbers of Irish men and women lost all sense of proportion, all sense of rationality, and plunged themselves into an orgy of delusion which continues unabated. Where once Values were absolute, they have now become relative. Where once the Irish were economical, they have become spendthrift. Where once the future of the Family and Nation were at the centre of life, there now reigns the love of the moment and the forgetfulness of the morrow.

Delusion and Illusion are now a way of life in Ireland. They ensnare countless hundreds of thousands, and they are lauded by the media as “the new reality”. Yet the fact remains that this “new reality” is not a real at all; it is an unreality, a virtual reality. But it is also as dangerous as Death, which is the ultimate reality. People can kid themselves about things, but *Facts* always impinge upon and destroy that which is not objectively real.

The Irish people are in no mood at this time to listen to sound counsel. They want their cake and to eat it. Anyone who tells them that this is not possible is berated as an abject pessimist, a party pouper; yet he is the prophet before his time. Ireland is walking a tightrope across a bottomless abyss. One slight breeze and the Nation and its families will be plunged into appalling misery and despair.

The Celtic Tiger is an illusion, just as were the South East Asian Tigers which preceeded it, and which registered “economic heights” that the Irish ‘miracle’ never achieved. As misery and despair poured upon the peoples of Asia like an unstoppable tidal wave, so will they do so in Ireland. Low interest rates will become high interest rates; Job vacancies will become Job scarcities; Creditors will become Debtors; and Boom will become Crash. Many do not believe this, so they are going to have to learn the hard way - just as the tens of thousands of families in 1980s England had to learn the hard way, when they went through their “boom economy” under Margaret Thatcher. The “hard way” is unpayable debt, which translates in to mortgage arrears and house repossession. It means a few sticks of furniture on the public

pavement as the bailiff locks the door to the repossessed house and drives off; it means families split up, living in a mixture of bedsits, hostels and shared rooms with relatives; it means traumatized kids and parents divorcing; it means small businesses going under, and bosses committing suicide. For the lucky ones, it merely means living in "your ideal house", but straining every nerve and fibre every month for the rest of your life to pay an increasingly heavy debt on a property that is now worth less than it cost to buy. It means that the "Celtic Tiger" is one day *soon* going to be a "Celtic Corpse".

But things don't have to be this way. Man is a rational animal. He has the capacity to think out new ways and new options. He has the ability to continue upon a mistaken path, or to turn back and regain the correct road. Man can do all this - whether or not he does so, however, is another matter.

The fact is that this unreality could not have taken hold on Ireland and the Irish people if it had not been programmed by those intent on destroying the Irish identity forever. The programme is not something that has emerged in the last decade or so, but is something that was developed and pushed subtly forward throughout the whole of the twentieth century, and which is rapidly coming to fruition in this new century. It is a programme which has sought to separate the people from their Language; a programme which has sought to separate the people from their Catholic Faith; a programme which has sought to separate the people from the Land; a programme which has sought to separate the people from Ireland, *their* Ireland. The programme is the work of a liberal and masonic few, a programme which if expressed clearly and openly would revolt the entire Nation. It is not so expressed, with the result that many - too many - are enthralled by the Liberal Illusion that we must always live in the "*Here and Now*", and give no thought to Tomorrow and the interests of our children.

In writing this book, Justin Barrett has done the Irish people a tremendous favour, even if many currently would not appreciate that fact. He has gone deep into the causes of the *real problems* that lie behind the façade of prosperity, behind the illusion that we are living in the best of all possible worlds. He has identified causes and has explained the consequences. Moreover, he has addressed what *needs to be done* to undo the evil consequences that are already upon us - rising crime, drug addiction, racial tension, divorce, declining morals, sexual perversion and so on - as well as those that are about to fall upon us. He points out that other Nations have taken the road that we have embarked upon and have come to grief. He shows that we have *no chance* to buck the trend, since that which goes up must necessarily come down. As a people, we ignore his counsel at our peril.

In explaining that the problems of modern Ireland are not mere accidents or unrelated symptoms, but the consequences of a malign philosophy and view of the world, Mr Barrett points us in the right direction - the road that will bring us back to sanity and real prosperity. He emphasizes that the New Ireland can only be built on things of absolute value, and those things are the Irish Language, the traditionally large Irish Family, a profound love of the Nation that does not shirk even at the idea of dying for it, and an unceasing fidelity to the Catholic Church and its authentic teachings, not the half-baked Social Gospel propounded these last 30 years or so in its place.

Mr Barrett has no illusions that the people will suddenly wake up to the real danger of their situation. How many are really interested in Language, other than the

"language of money and unlimited credit"? How many are interested in large families, when they spend their lives seeking a two up, two down box that will bleed them dry for a life time? How many will have a love of the Nation, when the Nation is being invaded by disparate peoples from the four corners of the earth, and who will soon be known in the media as "the New Irish"? How many would recognize, accept and act upon real Catholic teaching, after a generation has been raised on the slush, mush and sentiment that has been rammed down people's throats in the name of the Second Vatican Council?

Wherever we look, we see mere decay and decadence. Where there ought to be Heroes and Patriots, we find Cowards and Traitors. Where there ought to be Truth, there are Lies, Damned Lies and *Sunday Mirror* stories. Where there ought to be Men, we find women of both sexes. Yet the danger that confronts Ireland stares us all in the face. Many have a sense of unease, that much is sure. Some have an inkling that what is happening is not entirely a natural process. But few have the wit and intelligence to see the whole reality, and fewer still have any idea of what can and needs to be done. Justin Barrett is one of those few. It is *not* necessary to agree with him in every detail, in every interpretation, but there is no gainsaying the fact that in the broad strokes, he has hit the unsavoury, but real, truth.

The *Sligo Champion* in July 1840 wrote the following:

"How long will the landlords be suffered to plunder and impoverish people to whom they have no sympathy and on whose behalf they have never taken a single step. Sacred Heavens! Is it not horrible to think that in their fertile land millions of human creatures able and willing to work are doomed to pine and want and drag out a life more horrible than death itself when their taskmasters are enjoying all the luxuries life can afford."

Before long, the Irish will have cause to consider that quotation anew, with the sole difference that the word "landlords" will be replaced by "bankers and politicians". Then will Illusion and Delusion fall away *for a moment*, opening up thereby the possibility of a National Revolution that will revitalize and renew our country. This opening will be but for a moment, for others of more evil inclination will seek "solutions" far worse than the problem. Only if those who are Catholic and Nationalist, those who love Holy Mother Church and the Emerald Isle with all their hearts, are clear on what needs to be done can there be any chance of success. To achieve that success, we need to begin *now*. We need to study the real situation of Ireland; we need to study the real causes for our decline; we need to study who is responsible and why; we need to put structures in place and programmes into action; and we need to study deeply those answers that will give us personal and national salvation.

Judgement Day is coming. How we are judged is entirely in our hands. ***How will you plead on the Day of Reckoning?***

JOHN GRACE.

"X" And Why.

Abortionism, at least in its propagandist expression, is something new in this century because it proposes that an individual human life is disposable at the demand of another, on no more solid basis than the early development of the former, and on no greater justification than the convenience of the latter. It is, of course, rarely presented as crudely as that, since many of its advocates are drawn from the most educated and articulate sections of society. They are well enough acquainted with the evasive semantics required to give pseudo-sophisticated "acceptability" to what, plainly stated, represents an affront to human civilisation, as well as to both God and nature.

The humanity of the unborn child is never conceded, except in latent form, and a new and absurd concept of "*potential humanity*" is invented, which is in direct contradiction of observable fact. Its disposal is represented as some form of annulment, as if abortion resulted not in a death of any kind, but rather in a turning back of the clock, making a woman, as it were, *unpregnant* - ignoring, thereby, the realities and consequences of the surgical procedure involved. Although the arguments concerning abortion very soon after its legalisation revolve around questions of relative convenience, (revealing casual availability as a second line contraceptive to be the real goal), they are seldom so bold in the days of prohibition. The concession of the principle of a woman's "*right to choose*" or, in the language of concealment, "*reproductive self determination*", is represented as their only, and superficially reasonable, claim. Pressed on the point, however, most abortion advocates would accept that, though the choice of words might allow for greater sugar-coating, their objective is accurately encapsulated in the distilled essence of the infamous American case, *Roe vs. Wade*, the replication of which on a world-wide scale motivates their campaigning zeal.

It goes without saying that such a campaign requires an organised aversion to the Truth, and while it is generally unwise to impute guilt without concrete evidence, it is, nonetheless, reasonable to conclude that a great part of that aversion involves conscious and deliberate lying, given that stupidity or ignorance alone cannot account for so many falsehoods, especially amongst the intelligent. An idea which, plainly stated, cannot long convince intelligent minds, and yet has required complex organisation for its effective dissemination, must *by definition* exist only as a clever cover for a reasoning to which its advocates are unwilling, or unable, to give voice. This fact is of profound importance to the Pro-Life movement.

Unfortunately being wrong, even transparently so, does not preclude being popularly regarded as right, and scant regard for the truth can be, and is, worked to considerable political advantage. When one reviews the dramatic success in spreading both the doctrine of conveniently disposable humanity, and having it made "legal" in otherwise civilised countries, one must conclude, however reluctantly, that the abortionists have proceeded far more intelligently than they have been opposed.

This brings us, quite naturally, to our own situation and the not so immediate aftermath of the Attorney General vs. X and Others. The case was, in essence, a classic foot-in-the-door manoeuvre which altered, by Supreme Court interpretation and State connivance, the universally held meaning of Article 40.3,3. It swept aside its effectiveness as a defence of unborn human life and paved the way for the legislation of what amounts to pre-emptive infanticide. *A previously unthinkable nightmare had become a daylight reality.*

The initial response of the Pro-Life movement, made up of groups in existence since 1983, was muted and, while such an approach had merits, it was to prove nearly disastrous in the most immediate way. The public reaction was indeed fanned by an hysterical media, and there were dangers associated with saying anything at all, which led some to say as little as possible. On the other hand, a crucial period almost passed when imminent legislation was being prepared for abortion against an apparent background of widespread support. Yet it could not be denied that the judgement of Mr. Justice Costello in imposing the original restraining order was the inescapable logic of the 1983 Amendment, and of an anti-abortion stance that was not hypocritical. For while no one would intend or wish to intern pregnant women within the State, as was suggested, the declared intention to travel to a destination, where the obtaining of a surgical murder was the object, could not be allowed to pass without a fundamental and probably irretrievable undermining of the Constitutional Right to Life of the unborn child.

If reason and logic were not to the forefront of the debate, in the emotionally charged atmosphere of the time, it was after all anticipation of circumstances such as these that had in great part motivated the enactment of the Amendment in the first instance. The apparent pro-abortion sentiment unleashed by the case was more shadow than substance, and there was no reason to doubt that, upon sober reflection, the Irish people would not allow themselves to be carried away on a course which in reality benefited no one, least of all Miss X. In this regard, it must be remarked that the behaviour of some Pro-Life leaders at this time was really disgraceful and cowardly, and that whatever faults may genuinely be found with aspects of the organisation - as is normal in any group made up of fallible human beings - it was almost solely the emergence of *Youth Defence* which, at this crucial juncture, called at least a stay of execution on what otherwise would have been the immediate legislation for abortion in Ireland.

Formed as it was practically overnight, Youth Defence almost alone took a lucid, rational and courageous line, which rallied quickly the opponents of the X decision, and made clear that, media impressions aside, not only did the Irish people still oppose abortion overwhelmingly, but that a new generation had arisen to give voice and, as their name suggested, defence to the otherwise voiceless and defenceless unborn child. Yes, account must be taken of the real best interests of Miss X, but in equal measure the question of what was to happen to Baby X - that very real person also - would not and could not be ignored. The rallies organised at the time gave focus and weight to what might have been thrown aside in the rush to blind judgement. From that time on, Youth Defence has continued to be the most unequivocal obstacle to the Death Culture.

Even so, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the extent of the crisis which the March 5th 1992 judgement has generated in the Pro-Life cause in this country. Neither is it possible to stress too strongly the necessity for a radical reassessment of the inter-relationship of legal, moral, social, and political dimensions of the abortion debate, and their implications for the future. One thing, at least, is self-evident. Insofar as the Supreme Court verdict marked a profound break with passed assumptions concerning its legal aspects, any useful deliberations must begin with its proper appreciation; that is to say, since abortion has been legalised in effect up to the point of delivery, any intelligent effort at repeal cannot proceed without a clear understanding of how this stage was reached in the first place.

Consideration of the X case is, of course, problematic. It necessarily implies a good deal of speculation, since the primary participants were, and continue even now to be, less than honestly forthcoming. If we allow ourselves the very reasonable assumption that the inevitable consequences of the various actions were also intended consequences, we can at least eliminate the, in any case, unimpressive "accidental theory". The realisation that the participants acted, if not in concert then certainly, with complementary effect gives us an insight into their thinking and permits us safely to ignore the more obviously deceitful public statements.

For example, serious questions arise concerning the behaviour of the X family in the events preceding the case. While speculation in this regard is now of more academic interest than immediate importance, it will suffice merely to bear in mind that if the family were not intent on making their daughter's misfortunes the grounds for a legal challenge to the Republic's prohibition of abortion, their actions were uncannily consistent with such a purpose. If they were not acting at the direction of some external agency, such as *International Planned Parenthood Federation* (or its affiliate the I.F.P.A.), both the case and the manner of its presentation were well suited to their purposes, and it resembled closely the 'hard case' scenarios which provided these groups with their foot in the door in countless other countries.

For our purposes, however, it is more important that we reach some solid conclusions concerning the motivation of the Supreme Court itself, and the political background against which the decision was made although obstructed by the lack of material. All we have are the judgements themselves and, with one honourable exception, they are designed to conceal more than to illuminate. They contain a central statement and thereafter proceed with a justification, which is both unsustainable in logic and, if we were to use the legalistic phrase, is wrong in law and in fact. That, however, is only the beginning of confusion, for the Justices could not but have known that their argument was unsustainable and wrong in both law and fact. If they did not realise this, it was nevertheless most eloquently enunciated in the dissenting judgement of Mr. Justice Hederman. To what extent this judgement was written with the express purpose of alerting the general public to the extraordinary behaviour of his fellow justices, we will never know, but the great detail in contrast with the basis free constructions otherwise delivered are a mine of information which might easily have been overlooked and forgotten. His reference to the "*remarkable paucity of evidence*" concerning "*the vital matter of the threat to the mother's life*" is especially instructive.

He further draws attention to the non-appearance of Miss X in court, as well as the absence of any unambiguous statement from the clinical psychologist, who was not qualified anyway to pronounce on the likelihood of Miss X's suicide. This would appear, at first sight, to be an insoluble puzzle and it is hardly the only question arising.

Keeping in mind, however, that the Supreme Court decision had the effect of legalising abortion on what amounted to - in practical terms - very wide grounds, and submitting that fact to the assumption that the effect was also the intention, a very different and altogether clearer picture emerges. In this scenario the personal misfortunes of Miss X are relegated to almost incidental status, serving merely as the vehicle for the krytocratic manoeuvre of nullifying the *spirit* of Article 40.3,3 by redefining its *letter*. We can hardly expect the Justices to linger upon the weakest aspects of the defendant's proposition. In short, since the Justices could not care less whether Miss X was genuinely suicidal, they were not concerned to have it proved, hence a paucity of evidence. Indeed most, if not all, the enduring enigmas of the case are rendered transparent by this understanding; that come hell or high water or, in this case, a poorly founded appeal, the majority of the Supreme Court intended to change the law to facilitate abortion and exercised the only available means to do so.

Grounds for significant objection to this line of thinking are, at least, ostensibly implicit in the Court's judgements in the Attorney General (S.P.U.C.) vs. Open Door Counselling Ltd., and S.P.U.C. vs. Grogan. The Justices proper and expeditious application of the law in both instances apparently contradicts their subsequent judgement. Importantly, however, in neither case was it necessary to resolve the perceived conflict of rights under the Eighth Amendment in order to reach a conclusion on the provision of referral information, though strikingly Mr. Justice Hamilton did not wholly ignore it in his questioning. That this conflict is entirely imaginary has been borne out by the publicly stated experience of obstetricians and gynaecologists, as well as the exhaustive study conducted by the Medical Council. Nevertheless, not only in defiance but crucially without reference to medical fact, it was on this hypothetical conflict that the Supreme Court later drew their verdict, and found that it could only be resolved by favouring one above the other. This could only have been a personally, rather than legally or medically founded opinion, that there exists a right to abortion, effectively limitless but theoretically limited by Irish law so expounded. It remained consistent then that information concerning abortion provision be available only wherein it facilitated an abortion so limited. That since English clinics provided for abortion in circumstances other than those approved of by the Justices, it was legitimate to obstruct their promotion and advertisement. If this is more strictly logical than morally right, it nonetheless is.

But why? Why should the very persons uniquely invested with the guardianship of the Constitution, and indeed the rule of law as such, have acted in flagrant disregard of their august responsibility and reneged upon the solemn commitments of a lifetime? Such a momentous question is not easily and, probably never, completely answerable. It is, however, of crucial relevance, not only to the ongoing effort to maintain the legal protections afforded our unborn children, but

touching as it does our ability to place trust in those appointed as the final arbiters of Justice, it runs to whether it is possible to speak in other than historical terms of Republican free government in this country. It cannot be ignored for want of perfect information or certainty of conclusions. It is, one might say, a matter of life and death - only more so. Some clue as to what might have been in their minds may be found in the Chief Justice's reference to the judgement in *McGee vs. The Attorney General* and, in particular, its declaration that "*no interpretation of the Constitution is intended to be final and for all time. It is given in light of prevailing concepts and ideas*". If the learned Justice sought to point out that Irish law has heretofore been based not on the ground of legal positivism but on the principles of Natural Justice, as they are commonly understood, then he would have been correct. Reading in context, however, shows something quite different - an ignoble desire to make every law and every right granted under the law subject to ephemeral whim, to be constantly reinterpreted so that no-one could ever be absolutely sure how the Constitution might be applied, regardless of the words plainly written. There is no conceivable end to this new power, given that the same Supreme Court has granted itself the sole prerogative of ordaining what those prevailing concepts and ideas are. Obviously, with a Constitutional amendment procedure so clear and easily applied as the Irish one, there is absolutely no need to so reinterpret the Constitution, which could easily be changed except, of course, if the changes one wished to make were unlikely to enjoy the support of the people. The change in the law made evident by the X decision is obviously such a case. What it amounts to is this: that, while accepting that the enactment of the Amendment was for the purpose of prohibiting abortion, and foreclosing legislative and judicial interference with that prohibition without recourse to referendum, and while accepting that this may well have been the original effect, the contention is that this is no longer the case. To interpret and apply Article 40.3,3 in accordance with its plain language meaning or having regard to its intended purpose at the time of enactment would be at odds with "*prevailing concepts and ideas*". In short 1983 was then, and this is now.

The reasonable observer will here note with some surprise, the extraordinary similarity in the inherent logic of this construction and the most militant abortionist propaganda; that the prohibition of abortion is an anachronism, justifiable or at least explainable only in terms of an earlier, simpler time; the product of an uneducated and unsophisticated populace, making no impression on the modern intellect and having no place in a forward-looking era. Indeed, the Chief Justice goes even further, for he contends that a mere ten years is sufficient duration to render archaic, a fundamental moral principle enshrined in law so recently by overwhelming plebiscite.

What he does not do, unfortunately, is deliver for our curiosity an explanation of how such was wrought. He may, of course, together with his learned colleagues, have been affected by the initial public reaction expressed most powerfully in a rally of some 10,000 people. Prominent political personages, together with a media almost universally hysterical on social issues, were on hand to lend credence to the view that the rally had, firstly, a clear motivation and, secondly, was representative. In consequence, they may have sought by judicial sleight of hand to revoke effectively

the offending sub-section. This is the most comfortable assumption for many, since it is the most easily remedied. It does not, however, have the advantage of being believable. Although the Dublin rally was played in the media as a call for the repeal the Eighth Amendment, an intelligent examination, which the Justices could not fail to make if it were so influential in their thinking, would quickly reveal its fault lines. Clearly, the organisers alone had a premeditated objective, the marchers united only by the most immediately reactive rejection of the High Court injunction. Very few had given any thought to what they intended, and their effort, while a noisy event, hardly amounted to a premise for Constitutional radicalism. Moreover, and more importantly, since it is the primary function of the judiciary to ensure the just application of the law, they ought to be guided by Natural Justice principles or, at worst, by democratic mandate expressed in constitutional or statutory form only, and certainly not by the ochlocracy of rowdy street demonstrations. It is consequently not reasonable to suppose that the Court was so moved by such displays as to discern a genuinely altered conception of the principles of "*justice, prudence and charity*" on the part of the Irish people as a whole. Subsequent, equally large and larger crowds on behalf of Baby X and others have not, it will be noted, so moved.

Could it be then that the "*prevailing ideas and concepts*" were, in fact, their own? That the judgements are nothing more than an elaborately constructed cover for what the Court thought that the law ought to be and, consequently, in defiance of better knowledge and higher responsibility, declared it to be? That in their arrogance they sought to impose, and succeeded in imposing by a gross abuse of office, a government of Judges, a kryptocracy, in usurpation of both the legislative function and the stated democratic right of the people? Nothing less is what happened, and nothing less we may assume was intended. Those who object must surely answer some tricky questions concerning the *Abortion Referral Act*, as well as the Ward euthanasia case. For again, if the Court were not determined to impose at the judicial level all the aspects of the Liberal agenda that they can find remotely (and sometimes very remotely) within their powers to do, then their actions are inexplicably consistent. We remember too that it was the argument of necessity by European Court decision that Ireland dropped its, in any case unenforced, prohibition on buggery and gross indecency. It is against this background that those who would seek to protect our unborn children undertake their task, and it would seem obvious that its proper appreciation is indispensable. There is, however, a growing tendency toward a curious form of denial as otherwise intelligent Pro-Life leaders concentrate time and energy elaborating the flaws of the X case to the exclusion of their true significance. As a result, pre-X assumptions have reasserted themselves and ephemeral hopes have gained a dangerous credibility at the expense of the considerably more difficult, not to say enormous, task of formulating and effecting a substantial post-X strategy.

Perhaps the most seductive of these hopes is that of a successful appeal on the constitutionality of the legislation for abortion that the government might propose. It is all the more attractive since it is, ostensibly, the most easily and immediately attainable. The reasoning has it that since the State failed to argue that Article 40.3.3 completely prohibited abortion and that it envisaged it in some circumstances that the

case against abortion remains in some way yet to be heard. The judgement in the abortion referral case ought to have laid this hope to rest finally, but only to some extent is this the case. The Pro-Life argument has shifted instead, in certain quarters, to a new wording on what is, as it has been suggested, in fact, considerably more shaky ground than the original amendment, and that this then would be presented to the Court for further adjudication which is to miss the point entirely. Crucially, it is not *how* X is flawed that matters but *why*, and here the restatement of an established fact is insisted upon.

The Supreme Court legalised abortion of the unborn child of any age under circumstances wherein there is a "*real and substantial risk to the life of the mother*", including explicitly that occasioned by the unproved threats of suicide. We have further concluded that they did so with deliberate intent and full foreknowledge of the extent to which they were wrong in both law and in fact, motivated as they were by a personal belief in the right to abortion. Arguments and evidence concerning the flaws in the original judgements are hardly likely to impress, since they presuppose that the Justices were not fully cognisant of them at the time, even though they were explicitly enunciated by Mr. Justice Hederman and were so glaringly obvious. The Justices at the time ignored the most rudimentary rules of evidence and can only have done so in the belief that they would not like what they found. How reasonable, then, is it to assume that they will be overawed by that evidence now, or similarly conclusive presentations in a new case? How reasonable is it to assume that they would find unconstitutional, legislation framed in the terms that they themselves set out? While it is true that, constitutionally-speaking, there is no other practicable option than a new referendum, it is neither as simple nor easy as that. The Pro-Life Campaign has suggested an addition to Article 40.3,3 which would seek specifically to differentiate between direct and indirect abortion, thereby presumably providing for necessary medical intervention in the latter, and prohibiting the former as unnecessary in all and every case. In doing so, they have missed not one but several points.

While the terms direct and indirect would appear perfectly simple, they are in law a quagmire. Firstly, the law has not heretofore allowed a defence of benevolent intent in any instance where the otherwise criminal effect was foreseeable, and it would be simple enough for opponents in a referendum campaign to find many openings in any wording based on these concepts. Moreover, they are not even valid in the context in which they are used, as a Court would later find if such a wording were enacted. There is, in fact, no such thing as an indirect abortion in any sense, although common usage might suggest that such medical therapy concerning, for example, the treatment of ectopic pregnancy fall into this category. On the contrary, here it would be medical terminology surely rather than common usage that would take obvious precedence, in which event such treatment as in the above example is termed a salping-ectomy, specifically differentiating it from any kind of abortion, which has remained abhorrent to sound ethical practice by doctors for over two millennia. Again, we must account for a Supreme Court of malevolent intent, for was it not on flaws in a much clearer amendment that they based the X decision? Are we to expect them to respect what actually would be a confused wording were it to be passed?

Essentially, any thinking along these lines falls into the abortionists trap of recognising a potential conflict of rights, when, in fact, no such conflict exists. No matter the choice of words, no one could, with certainty, declare on its applicable effects, for which reason alone it ought properly to be rejected. The whole issue of the wording returns us logically to where we began. We ought not to have to find an air tight wording to prevent the widespread slaughter of our children in their most defenceless state. In a world where very little can be taken for granted, that much at least should go without saying. Even that the 1983 Amendment was felt to be necessary at all raises some very serious concerns running far deeper than the corruption of the current Supreme Court, or even the whole legal system, as was evidenced by the debates which proceeded the announcement of that now fateful wording. One alternative offered is very revealing.

At one point, during the deliberations by the Attorney General's Office reviewing a possible abortion clause, the then Attorney General proposed what might be called an exclusion wording. In the final draft, defeated in the Dail, it read: *"Nothing in this Constitution shall be invoked to invalidate or to deprive of force or effect a provision of the law on the grounds that it prohibits abortion"*. This would have served to exclude the judicial discovery of an implied personal right to abortion i.e. no Roe vs. Wade style surprises. It seemed very plausible, given that the McGee case, which had struck down the ban on contraception for married couples, followed so closely the right to marital privacy finding in the American Griswold case since it was upon this logic that abortion on demand soon followed. What it did not do, of course, was preclude legislation for abortion at some future time, and was rejected by most Pro-Lifers for that reason. Implicit in the rejection of this proposal was a distrust of elected representatives, which has sadly been justified by experience, but significantly not acted upon. That is to say, if the Pro-Life movement did not trust the Oireactais in 1983, why were they not active in ensuring the removal of the untrustworthy, since clearly they were the overwhelming majority as was borne out by the ballot? Surely, we knew that the Supreme Court was politically appointed and, if the Government were not Pro-Life, the Court could not indefinitely remain so? Surely, we must have understood that a Pro-Life Amendment, no matter how cleverly crafted, could not survive deliberate malevolence on the part of ideologically motivated Justices? That, plainly, a constitutional prohibition on abortion could not forever resist both a hostile legislature and a hostile judiciary?

And here is the most basic question - ***IF WE DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THEN, DO WE UNDERSTAND THAT NOW?***

If we do not, then it is, as the saying goes, all over bar the shouting. For new referendum or not, the forces fighting for Life will have committed the cardinal error of short-sightedness and narrow focus, which must inevitably deliver this country up to legalised and widespread abortion - and sooner rather than later. It must always be understood that nothing happens in isolation, and the failure to take a holistic approach to any problem means to surrender in advance what may later prove to be key factors; that it means finding that, by the time the final conflict is fought out, the essential instruments for conducting the struggle are in enemy hands. It is no disparagement of

the Pro-Life campaigners of the Eighties to point out their errors insofar as they could not reasonably have foreseen their consequences. Considering, however, the seriousness of the present situation, and the immediate gravity of the issues involved, it would amount to criminal negligence for them to be repeated. All the more so, since practically the only positive that may be taken from the various developments of the last decade must surely be the banishment of illusions.

The 1983 Amendment, Article 40.3,3 did fall into the fatal trap of seeking to take account of an entirely imaginary balance of rights and as such was flawed. Having said that, it was reasonably clear in intent and the words certainly definite enough that persons acting in good faith would have to concede it as an absolute prohibition on abortion. Even its opponents were firm believers that such was the case. If it failed, its failure was to a large extent a matter of its abandonment. Inserted into the Constitution, at a high tide of anti-abortion sentiment, it was appointed as a lonely guardian for that sentiment, while all around the sharks of the media-applauded propagandists sought (and to a frightening extent succeeded) to undermine its foundations in the minds of the people, and the power of the Government.

For example, at a time when abortion was an issue unconsidered and certainly unremarked by most people in this country, the abortionist camp was inexorably weaving its long term programme, using gullible and ideologically-sozzled student representatives to push forward the campaign. Their sound reasoning was that the right to facilitative information on abortion in England was not at all far from the right to abortion as such. S.P.U.C. took the case against them to the courts, and Pro-Life Ireland made a fatal error. The abortionist cause was at all times cast in the role of defenders of free speech, a claim somewhat haughtily and catastrophically ignored rather than countered by S.P.U.C. The case had the further advantage of testing the limits of the Amendment, it being likely that the presentation in the X case had its origin in the questioning of counsel by Mr. Justice Hamilton in the High Court concerning a perceived conflict of rights. In seeking to prevent what amounted to advertising, if not touting, for business on behalf of English clinics by purely legalistic means, without explaining their reasoning and making the very strong case for limited censorship in this area, S.P.U.C. committed a dangerous mistake. In the vacuum, the Students Unions fronting for unseen schemers were able to present the issue as the case of young, idealistic underdogs struggling courageously against anachronistic “old foggies”, hell-bent on manipulating the law to bludgeon cherished principles of free speech. Crucially, they were able to avoid the direct issue of abortion altogether, except to suggest a point bordering on the ludicrous that an injunction against information actually resulted in more abortions. Attempts by Pro-Life students to counter the public impression failed for lack of organisation and especially for lack of help.

As so often occurs, those who succeed in framing the argument can to a large degree control its outcome, and the Pro-Life movement’s confidence in the correctness of their interpretation of the Amendment, to the exclusion of necessary campaigning for political support, proved really disastrous. Yes, legally they were right, and the injunctions were granted, but inevitably this was bound to be tested

politically, and the failure to canvass support earlier meant that, by the time the referendum on abortion information was held, the argument was largely over having been cast effectively, however dishonestly, as an issue of freedom in the public mind. When one considers that the tireless efforts of many, in the deliberately confused referenda and Dail election campaign, came as close as it did to ensuring a rejection of that amendment, some idea dawns as to what might have been.

The failure, or rather the neglect, to rally public opinion early on this issue had its political effect as well, emboldening the “pro-choice” advocates within and without the Oireactais, although had we realised it the Government had long since ceased to be genuinely Pro-Life - if indeed it can ever have been said to be so. Pro-Life is meant here, of course, in that positive sense, which requires far more than the prohibition of abortion, but rather includes that whole panoply of measures to ensure that abortion is, firstly, a less likely option taken and eventually unthinkable. Various Governments, on the other hand, even while loudly proclaiming their Pro-Life credentials, continued to fund from taxpayers money such rabidly pro-abortion groups as the innocuously termed *Irish Family Planning Association* to the exclusion of any really worthwhile efforts that might have saved babies. Moreover, there was a deafening silence from the Dail and Seanad benches, except for pro-abortionists, on the issue of so-called information. To that extent they were already some distance down the death culture road, even before the Amendment was enacted, although one could be forgiven for not anticipating quite how quickly they would have moved, and how far they had got by the time of X.

Yet, somehow, someone knew how fast and how far, and knew it well enough to divine exactly *when and how* Article 40.3,3 ought to be challenged. For it was not the media’s softening up of public opinion (which was not as it transpired as complete as they would have liked to imagine), nor was it the well chosen hard case that delivered the shattering verdict of that March 5th. It was not even the arrogance of the Supreme Court. None of these played so crucial a role as the dawning realisation that the government, and no conceivable alternative government, had the determination to defend the people’s wishes as expressed on abortion.

Consider this: if the government had been so determined, it might have impeached the Supreme Court under Article 35 for “*stated misbehaviour*”, and given the circumstances ought certainly to have done so. The Justices themselves, being more than passingly aware of this provision, remained unperturbed, even audacious, in its face. Granting a moment the benefit of the doubt that no criminal discussions actually took place between the Taoiseach’s office and the Justices, they had at least received a very heavy hint concerning what the legislature regarded as the desirable verdict, in and of itself reprehensible. The public statements of senior members of the Government, together with the reception by the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, of unrepresentative and, in some senses, repugnant characters set the tone. It must, however, have been the unprecedented decision to finance an appeal against a provision of the Constitution, together with the concession without argument by the Attorney General that Article 40.3,3 envisaged some form of legal abortion, which gave the

Court the unmistakable nod that the government wanted Miss X to have an abortion, and that they were willing to countenance almost any means to achieve it.

Of course, the Court would have been well within its powers and, more importantly, within its responsibilities to have rejected such suggestions, but, as we have already established, it had no desire to do so. The Government's clear abdication of the legislative function provided them with the opportunity they wanted, but otherwise would never have dared to take. They hardly needed to fear a negative response to a verdict they had been invited to deliver. Hadn't the Court itself noted that the X decision was only made in the absence of clarifying legislation concerning the effects of the Amendment? Could this have been for any other reason than that the government did not, even in 1983, wish the total prohibition of abortion, but given the public sentiment at the time would not have dared to legislate? Even now, they know better not to legislate as each party jostles the other forward to be the one to take actual responsibility for what each in their heart agrees with.

Why not a new referendum, save that they know full well that the Irish people will reject any insinuation of a provision for abortion. The miserable attempt to do so in late 1992 fell even in the deliberately confusing circumstances created. Of course, a real prohibition is, to the born-again Liberals, unthinkable now that they have already stepped out so far. Politically appointed party hacks in the Supreme Court come from the culture of deals and swindling, knowing full well which way to jump, and due regard must always be taken, given the longevity of their appointment, to just how far back the planning must have gone coming to fruition in March of 1992. Their function now is no longer to uphold Justice nor any recognisable semblance of it, but to carry from their unelected and unassailable seats the political flak for measures so repugnant that their colleagues in other more vulnerable seats feel unable to.

The story of the X case is as old as politics in Ireland, and not at all the surprise that it appeared at the time. It is the story of a liberal-minded Establishment pushing on a people as much of their noxious agenda as they might at any time be prepared to stomach. It will push on and on, until that Establishment achieves its goals or flounders under its own stupidity and evil. The cruel triumvirate of the sneaking, the pompous and the two-faced, which condemned Baby X to death, is not new, though it sets the precedent for further such executions, where only the Judges and Jury are guilty.



Twenty Seven Years Of Failure.

"But wasn't Mr. Crotty the man with his finger in the dike when the Constitution was being washed away?" That's how Mr. Justice Brian Walsh described it, and he hardly exaggerated. Nonetheless, when the government attempted by sleight of hand to ratify the *Single European Act* (S.E.A), very few were astute enough to perceive that they had repudiated the Irish conception of government, and had in fact broken faith with Constitutionalism as such. That they had been prevented from doing so was down to the courage and tenacity, not to say patriotism, of one man, Raymond Crotty, and did not negate what they had intended. Acting arrogantly, deliberately and with malice aforethought to undermine the Republic, they sought to concede forever the freedom of the Irish Nation, and to do so without reference or regard to the people whose trust they had betrayed. No form of words is sufficient, nor can anyone possibly exaggerate the import of this gross abuse unparalleled in Irish history. A collaborator government had treasonously established itself to enforce foreign domination, not by force, but by persuasion and calculated deception.

In any other country and any other time the repercussions of their discovery might have been forcible, but not in Ireland and not in 1987. We had grown used to such things and no longer even remarked upon them much. The same government, which had to be compelled to grant the democratic niceties, was capable nonetheless of returning a resounding endorsement of the S.E.A. in the subsequent referendum.

For those who had opposed the further choking integration of Europe, the campaign was a dishearteningly instructive lesson in power politics. The entire machinery of the State, with every major political party, was arrayed against them and, despite the mundane drudge of daily heroism, there never was at any time a realistic possibility of success. Moreover, and still more disheartening, the final count in the Maastricht referendum reveals that almost no progress had been made since 1987, although the advance to Federalism is now so obvious that even the most gullible is aware of it.

Why? What happened to the spirit of Irish Nationhood, which had been so fervently renewed in the events of Easter Week, and which still as late as the Fiftieth Anniversary had the power to evoke the passions of a people imbued with a sense of confidence in their own freedom? That a foreign force might brutally impose its dominion was one thing, but that a people of its own volition would surrender forever the direction of their own destiny was surely evidence of a profound malaise which had settled upon the nation, the origins of which were to be internally found. It is obvious that it must have preceded our membership of the EEC, even our application for it, but as to exactly how far back?

To gain perspective on the question, we might well trace the psychology to the 1890 visit of Queen Victoria, when the people of Dublin and, one imagines, from elsewhere turned out to welcome the monarch as "our" Queen and Empress, revealing

that peculiar colonialist mentality which so often makes its appearance. For it is true that, with all the antipathy towards the English still endemic in the country, we have, nonetheless, been unable to shake off a fundamental inferiority complex as regards foreigners of any race or nation, a complex which finds contemporary expression in the abject philia of all things - whether ideas or patterns of behaviour - un-Irish. We even have a phrase for it, that something is "*a bit Irish*" to describe the stupid, the backward, the inefficient or useless. A comparable sense of absurd feelings of inferiority, coupled with a pride more begrudgingly than deeply felt, cannot be found in any other European nation, and it is the source of many problems when the Irish come to look upon the world.

When the Irish Free State was founded, two distinctive features soon became apparent which have remained substantially unaltered from that day to this. The first is that a political establishment quickly settled itself into power, and its effective control of the nation has remained unchallenged and unchanged by the manoeuvrings of various parties and combinations of parties in pursuit of nominal rule. The second is that this establishment, so adept in pursuit of its own narrow interests, displayed, and continues to display, a remarkably unmitigated incompetence concerning the wider affairs of government.

Nowhere was that incompetence more palpably felt than in the economic sphere, where policy consistently amounted to little more than a crude aping of our larger and generally more prosperous neighbour, to the exclusion of an economic model more suited to our size and circumstance. Various excuses have been made to cover the inevitable failures, including the accusation against the British of a post-colonial economic imperialism. Even insofar as this was so, it examines the symptoms rather than the cause, and does not account for the dereliction in the clear duty to remedy that situation by some kind of originality.

By the 1950's, the extent to which these policies had failed was not only becoming more apparent, but leading inexorably towards a crisis which might eventually seriously threaten the cosy stability upon which the Establishment's privilege depended. While economic mismanagement merely visited poverty and despair upon the effectively disenfranchised, it was not only bearable, but not really a cause for much concern. However, there did seem at that time the potential that things were getting seriously out of hand, and it did not require much intelligence to foresee that a new approach was required. The timing could not have been more lamentable since, true to form, the government of the day, when fishing around for "*innovative means*" to maintain their hold, settled on the ideas of John Maynard Keynes, then very much in vogue.

This is not the place to deal extensively with all that is wrong with Keynesian economics, save to note briefly that at that time even to hint at the grave and complex doubts that might properly have been raised was to reveal how very old fashioned and backward one was. For Keynes, the idea was to boost demand within the economy and lift employment by "*deficit budget financing*" which was, it later transpired, Civil Service jargon for spending money we didn't have, on projects we would in large part have been better off without. Thus was abandoned the strict rigour of

balanced budgets, which had prevailed since the foundation of the State, and indeed before that, since the Act of Union had been forced upon Ireland by the literal bankruptcy of Ireland by the enormous weight of debt accumulated by our last native Parliament. To be sure, this policy had occasionally to be carried out to the letter of much misery, but it had at least the advantage that it passed as little as possible of the failures of one generation of leaders on to the next. Of course, given the absence of State indebtedness at that time our national credit rating was quite high.

For the Establishment, it had numerous recommendations. Firstly, though much of the money was variously wasted, or spent on unnecessary imports, which is very nearly the same thing, it was obviously bound to generate some degree of extra employment and at least the illusion of prosperity. This was unquestionably, or rather unquestioningly, popular and if the impending crisis looms all the more ominously, so what so long as it is not happening today? Secondly, very large and very expensive government projects dispensed by political patronage revealed opportunities for corruption previously overlooked and now eagerly seized upon. The Whittaker 'miracle' was not only in the saving of necks, but promised for the enterprising and unprincipled very much more.

There was a problem, however, as indeed there always is. The boosting of demand within the economy that resulted from such borrowing carried with it the weight of eventual repayment, as well as the added mounting interest, which could only serve to cripple such demand at some future stage. Moreover, that weight had to be carried in good times and bad. The lenders of capital were understandably concerned as to these repayments, and the manner in which the Government was distributing its largesse did not inspire confidence. More than 80% of Ireland's National Debt has been spent on capital projects which had no return on investment, and while in theory it seems impossible for a State to become bankrupt, neither is there any obvious means of enforcing the repayment of debt should the contracting government find itself unable or unwilling to repay. The bankers and lending institutions were becoming increasingly concerned at the insubstantial nature of the *Programmes for Economic Development*, and Ireland's line of credit, upon which we were now entirely dependent, was not open-ended. There was a limit and it was approaching fast.

To salvage the nation's finances from this dangerous predicament would even then have been a task of painful delicacy, but hardly yet impossible for a government so determined since, at the end of the 1960's, the worst of the extravagance was still to come. No such idea was considered though. The government already committed to the catastrophic illusions of Keynesianism took the decision in the early 70's to take on deficit financing of current as well as fruitless capital expenditure, a move of unparalleled stupidity unsupported by any theory ever known, and clearly motivated by electoral, rather than economic, thinking. In doing so, they had resolved to see it through to the end, and saw the problem principally in terms of maintaining a credit rating and the ability to borrow.

Certain events running concurrent to these developments were to provide "a solution" to the problems of the Establishment, while again being inimical to the interests of the nation as a whole.

The pressure in Britain to apply once more for membership of the European Economic Community had been steadily growing for some time, and it was clear that upon their return to power the Conservative party, under the baneful premiership of Edward Heath, intended to do so. In the absence of the objections raised by General De Gaulle, such an application would be likely to succeed. Considering the overwhelming dependence on the British market for exports, it was obvious that this action would have profound implications for Ireland, though the conclusions that were drawn from it were not nearly so inescapable as the government claimed them to be. A range of options remained open, but unexamined.

For example, the British had negotiated several dispensations concerning trade with the Commonwealth, and there was no reason in theory why they might not have done so in our case as well, having regard to the bilateral agreements to which they and we were already a party. We might have sought to negotiate some form of associate membership, while remaining outside the Community as such. We might, in short, have done many things, but instead chose the obvious and the wrong. We followed our acknowledged betters and submitted what amounted to a joint application for membership of the EEC.

To say that Ireland's economy was unprepared for entry into the Common Market is to understate the matter massively, a fact which has only gained in evidence and clarity in succeeding years. What is perhaps not so obvious, but equally true, is that such considerations featured minimally, if at all, in the calculations of our political masters. Foremost in their minds was that they should continue to retain and enjoy privilege, and that meant forestalling reality in the first instance, and shifting responsibility in the second. For them, Europe held out the prospect of maintaining the illusion.

The instantaneous effect was that the Irish State's credit line was reaffirmed and extended to what, at the time, must have seemed like infinity. This was not a declaration of confidence in Ireland's future economic prospects, which were, to those who saw more clearly, bleaker insofar as they had changed at all. Rather it was a recognition that having in large part abandoned economic sovereignty, we had deprived ourselves of the freedom to choose to default and had acquired something akin to a guarantor in our "Big Brother", the Community.

More enticing still was the money for nothing implicit in structural funding, which in theory served to prepare disadvantaged areas for increased competition, while in practice it did at best poorly compensate for permanently demolishing real efforts at development. For, although almost no one was discerning enough to see it, given that the vast majority of funds were devoted to infrastructural development to give Irish industry access to European markets, the same infrastructure was bound to open the Irish market to European industry, with its natural advantage of economies of scale.

Since the government had no intention of engaging in real development, not knowing how, the abdication of freedom to act was perceived to be of little value and the bargain seemed well struck. After all, they had stumbled along so clumsily for fifty years, and this was the first time someone had offered them money for it.

For general public consumption there were, of course, many "mirage" blandishments, which served to popularise the Common Market among certain key groups, however much the real interests of these groups might be outside the Community, or at least in a very different relationship to it. Foremost was the Common

Agricultural Policy, which variously had the effects of committing Irish farmers to an unreasoning devotion to the European "ideal", depopulating the land, and ruining Irish agriculture perhaps irreparably. Then there was the great rallying cry of free trade, "*Markets abroad, Jobs at home!*", which for Irish industry, mollycoddled on years of corrupt protectionism made, except in a few cases, absolutely no sense at all. Yet despite its intellectual dishonesty, the free trade argument gained credence in intellectual circles which ought to have known better. Maybe they did know better, but whatever the motivation, their false enthusiasm captured the imagination of an electorate still riding on the wave of borrowed money. In any case, the Treaty of Rome was ratified by a motley combination of bribery, deception, foolishness, and the triumph of hope over experience. Resoundingly so - 83% to just 17%.

What is most disturbing for us is that even though the vast majority of Irish people have been sincerely, not to say severely, disenchanted with the promises made prior to our entry to the EEC, the anti-integrationist forces have to date been unable to muster a majority of the electorate to register that angst in the only way that might make a difference. In the three subsequent opportunities to check the process, the progress made has been dismal and disheartening. How so? Surely by now the claims made in favour should have lost their allure, and warnings then proclaimed from the wilderness been so amply demonstrated, that anyone seeking to make those claims today could not expect to be taken seriously?

Contrary to reason and experience alike, the progressive encroachments of European Federalism have acquired such an untouchability, an almost teflon exterior, that they go unquestioned and in most cases entirely unheeded, while efforts at criticism, though originating from sources which have never been wrong on essentials, are ignored or openly derided. It is a shocking fact, as well as a sobering thought, that though firstly the ***Common Market Defence Campaign***, then the ***Constitutional Rights Campaign***, and latterly the ***National Platform*** with others, have each in their day predicted with dreadful accuracy the catastrophic effects of increased integration, there does not even in the wake of the Maastricht debacle appear to be a reasonable basis on which to regroup with optimism.

The reader will understand that this harsh appreciation for our situation does not seek to disparage the courage or sincerity of persons involved in each campaign. It does, however, seek to point out the obvious failure, at least insofar as the practicalities of getting out the vote, and serves as an objective point of departure for formulating that much needed reasoned basis for regrouping; doing so with regard to the political adage that politics is the art of the possible and, therefore, within the narrow range of what is practicable. We should note well then the dismal landscape.

Throughout the period from immediately prior to our entry in 1973 up to the present day, those who have had the courage to oppose the process of European integration have failed precisely to the extent to which they have allowed themselves to be cast in the role of opposers. This is the principal cause to which all others are variously related, the superficially plausible argument that it is easier to get people to say "no" than "yes" on any given question. This is not self-evidently the case, though it was the premise on which all the campaigns have been based.

The diverse nature of the characters involved may be at fault here. After all, it is hard to imagine a positive programme of action from such divergent groups as the Workers Party and Family Solidarity, but that goes nowhere to lessen the effect which the essential negativism imposed on the campaigns had in stultifying the prospects for success. It may well be said that the only common ground agreeable to such groups was a "No" to the Europe proposed by the Federalists, but in equal measure, it may well be that the search for such common ground condemned the campaigns to composites of tiny minorities forming a larger minority.

It would certainly amount to a rare moment of despair for an entire nation to turn its support to a coalition of naysayers who were, albeit by tactical decision, unwilling and unable to present a positive and coherent alternative to that which they so fervently opposed. Yet on that soft earth was built, and continues to be built, the anti-Federalist position. It has been possible in this atmosphere to cast voting against further integration as a vote of no-confidence in the nation itself, a low ebb which the Irish people, at least those not heretofore emigrated, have not reached. God forbid that they ever should, for despair would replace false hope with the total and immovable apathy of resignation. In the present context, however, false hope is the paper thin cover for an unwillingness to face a harsh reality which appears bereft of viable choice at this time.

In short, the people of Ireland may be heartily sick of European promises. They may well be lies that they don't believe anymore. They are certainly sick of being the beggars of Europe for handouts, which make meagre difference to an economy in terminal decline. But note it well, for this is the crucial concept upon which a realistic opposition can be formed, and has not heretofore been understood, that this people though hardly as gullible as in the past, are not ever going to abandon even this for the straightforward "No". If not the European Union then, what is the reasonable and altogether unanswered question of three referenda. No wonder we have failed.

It will be argued, and not always disingenuously, that the practice of avoiding the formulation of an answer has allowed for the aforementioned disparate groups to reach the 1/3 mark, and that time will of itself deliver the rest so long as mouths stay shut, and the various elements of the coalition avoiding alienating other elements. Even if that were so, it would be a most dangerous course to take, for at least the disparate groups may agree on this much; that the whole edifice of the current Establishment rests on its European policy. If it were to collapse without alternative, the chaos is inconceivable and certainly no responsible person could want it.

In any case, the hypothesis is flawed. Structures of political establishment, such as we have in this country, do not simply collapse unannounced or in a vacuum of apathy. They do not fall, they must be *pushed*, and pushing requires definite direction.

Moreover, it presupposes that all the elements of the coalition are genuinely committed to anti-Federalism, and that is not the case. The Left, insofar as it has been a part of that movement, has considered each new integrationist move in isolation and divined in the circumstances where the short term advantage lay. To that extent and no further have they opposed Federalism, which is hardly the same thing as being anti-Federalist as such. The Left, and in particular its higher echelons, who know very well how the world really is, and what Socialism really is,

are not at all hostile to the Federal idea in principle, which is wholly in keeping with the general thrust of Marxist thought. Rather they have taken tactical positions with a view to immediate advantage. Were this attitude for one moment to endanger seriously the continued encroachment of Europe into Irish affairs, which most especially in the social sphere has been so instrumental in advancing the cause of the Left, they would not hesitate for a moment, and the call to the unity of the workers of Europe would bring them home to the Federalist camp.

Let's not be misled by appearances, which only serve to cloak substance. The European Union is the culmination of the socialist ideal for Europe, and must inevitably emerge through many interim disguises as a Socialist Superstate. For the Irish people to gear their efforts to preserve their freedom in such a way as not to offend the Left is a less than amusing joke. No, they may be ignored in any sober calculations, and any attempt to placate them will cripple our efforts, which may well be the intention.

So then, we desire a programme, a definite political agenda upon which to debate with our adversaries and we have concluded that such a programme must rally people to the National Idea.

Further, there must be no more lying to the Irish people. Now phrases such as that are provocative, but they need to be. If we intend to present the people with a positive programme, then surely that must be done honestly, remembering that in trying to be "clever" our opponents will always be more 'clever' than we are, having grown accustomed to the means of deception. Their careers are built upon it and depend upon it. Our own side is not so well suited to being clever in the pejorative sense of that word, so we have not only to be more honest, which we have always been, but totally honest, which some otherwise well intended persons have not always been.

When it was maintained that Ireland's status in the Community would not have been altered by rejecting the S.E.A. or Maastricht, this was patently not true. While the dogs in the street could bark it, it did our case no benefit at all. Wasn't the argument water tight in International Law and didn't eminent legal persons testify to it? True, but then also isn't it obvious that there are ways around the technical points of law involved, as was shown by veiled threat when Denmark rejected Maastricht the first time, and told to go and vote "democratically" again until the right answer was achieved? For example, it would have been possible for every other country to resign from the Community as it stood on the Treaty of Rome and sign a new treaty of identical provisions to the exclusion of the offending member. Of course, this particular option was hardly desirable, but the attachment of the establishment groups in other member states to Federalism meant that any option, any at all, would have been preferable to the halting of integration. This much was obvious to everyone, and technical arguments over legal questions were never going to be impressive. If the opponents of the Treaties were not lying, they were at least naive. Either way the damage to credibility was incalculable. If one thing claimed was verifiably not true, how could confidence be placed in *anything* that was said?

The motivation was certainly purer than our opponents, who lied ceaselessly and often outrageously, but for the most part not as obviously. The Constitutional Rights Campaign, and later the National Platform, felt that to do otherwise was in

some sense to refight lost battles and doomed to the same failure. The idea would seem to spring from the novel notion that a decision of the electorate, however erroneous, becomes thereafter their unalterable will. Not so. A convincing case was to be made for reviving the old arguments and testing the validity of statements previously made. The anti-Federalists had nothing to lose and everything to gain from such a probing of the recent past, as was exemplified by those occasions on which it was done, whereas the integrationists were open to exposure by developments as either liars or reckless fools. At the very least, they had been wrong in their optimism, while we in our direst pessimism had been proven correct on every essential point.

This was the message the public were never allowed to hear. Instead, it seemed by implication that we accepted our mistake on the Treaty of Rome and later the S.E.A. In declaring them unchangeable, we appeared to grant assent that they were a good thing. To the electorate, this cleverness meant only that we admitted being wrong before, but appealed nonetheless for their trust now. No wonder that appeal largely fell on deaf ears, and impressions bear out that most who voted with us did so in spite, rather than because, of this incredible stance.

To the objection that to take any other position was to invite the "*what else is there?*" retort, well that question was in the public mind anyway, inasmuch as they did not believe us, and our disclaimers only served to aid the other side in precluding any debate on it, when was in fact it was far from unanswerable.

In the event that Ireland had rejected the S.E.A. or the Maastricht treaties, a very difficult situation would have been created for us in the short to medium term. This is a fact and everyone knew it. To pretend otherwise was plainly dishonest, but more than that, it was to invite ridicule and certain defeat. If, on the other hand, we had concentrated first on how right we had been about the disastrous effects of European integration, and sought to persuade people that short to medium term difficulties were a bearable necessity to avoid yet worse down a Federal road; and if, secondly, we had proposed a positive programme as to how these might be borne; then we were in the real argument.

To the suggestion that such a course would not have succeeded in either referenda, it is remarkable that the course we actually took did not succeed to any greater degree, and has left us crucially with no basis for the future. If we are to resign ourselves to making the best of Amsterdam also, then we have truly and irredeemably lost, not only the battle, but the war. Compounding the problem of leading forward with arguments self evidently not true was the damage done by the extent to which the various campaigns were dominated by special interest foibles. While, perhaps, in themselves correct, they did nothing to enlarge the lobbies appeal beyond the narrow limits of perpetual minority.

For example, in the case of the Single European Act, advocates of Irish neutrality served to restrict the discussion on the vital economic arguments, which alone might have swayed the uncommitted. Within days of the announcement of the referendum, the *Campaign for Irish Neutrality* had convincingly made its point - that Ireland's signature on the treaty was the effective abandonment of that "*special role*" in world affairs assumed during the Second World War, and maintained under pressure through subsequent Superpower conflict. Now, whatever one thought of

that special role's value, it was clear at least that within those few days anyone who felt strongly enough in favour to forego the promises, primarily economic, made on behalf of the Act made up their minds to do so. They were not a majority, no sane person could have believed that they were, and they will never be. Yet, though not one single extra vote could be gained thereby, questions concerning the effect of the S.E.A. on Ireland's neutrality continued to dominate the limited broadcast time and print space allocated to the "anti" side, to the consequent exclusion of the vital economic arguments which could alone have made them part of a majority.

Whereas the effect of the Act on our neutrality was widely accepted by the general public, the effects on our economy were not. The Federalists had a free hand to cast the debate in terms of economic necessity versus the luxury of abstract principles, and were able to do so in a country of high unemployment, where the actual merits of neutrality were not universally agreed. Smooth passage for ratification was, thereby, ensured.

The Maastricht campaign was a replay of the same single issue short-sightedness. This time abortion dominated the campaign all the more ludicrously, since the primary spokesmen who claimed that the Treaty held dangers for the unborn child could only be drawn to say that it "might" do so. Might? One could hardly conceive of a weaker starting point. The Federalist did not say we might get increased structural funds, even though the doubts which hung over this money were considerable. Quite apart from the weak-kneed assertions by some Pro-Lifers (Youth Defence excepted), there was a more basic and practical objection to the virtual hi-jacking of the opposition to the Treaty by one focus. Apart altogether from lopsiding the issues, it was bound to fail.

The legalistic arguments concerning the effects on Ireland's ability to prohibit abortion were complex and confusing, as distinct from definite sums of money. While it is a sad commentary on both the intelligence and the moral fibre of the Irish electorate, the number of people capable of, firstly, understanding them, and, secondly, being swayed by them was relatively small. While all over Europe opposition grew to the Treaty, in Ireland we debated a hypothesis and lost our opportunity.

The bitter irony is that in both instances the stubborn insistence on continuing to push a particular side issue long after the point had been accepted by the general public crippled efforts to achieve the common aim, and ensured the nightmare scenarios which these same groups had expended so much time and energy warning against.

As a first step, it must be agreed that such mistakes are not to be repeated *ad infinitum* - the Federalist cause advances with promises of prosperity which are demonstrably false, and in the demonstration of the falsity lies the key to checking the integrationist progress. The Irish people will continue to support the Establishment's European policy so long, and only so long, as they believe it to be the best option in financial terms. While other important issues have a very definite part in the opposition movement, we must condition ourselves in the heat of referenda campaigns, if we are permitted another, to talk money almost exclusively. For money is what most concerns the politically uninformed; that is to say, the vast majority of the electorate, and it is in the failure to make good the "European dream" that the Federalists are most vulnerable. An "opposition movement"? No such movement exists in the accepted political use of the term, gathering anything like a meaningful

number of the “No” campaigners together on a permanent basis. Anyone familiar with the organisation for these referenda will note the singularly haphazard nature of the endeavour. Certainly the brunt of the canvass, where it was done at all, fell to the most estimable people in the country, but as for “organised”, this it most definitely was not. As usual, individuals in many parts of the country previously volunteered and were to be called on again, and others that they knew could be counted upon. In some cases meetings brought in new people, but they were few and far between, and since they invariably arrived after the process had started it was not always possible to direct them to best advantage. Above all, planning was left until the date of the vote was announced, which was the prerogative of the opponent. Despite sincere efforts, these people almost all departed after the count was over not to be involved again. Assessing and exploiting the weaknesses in the Federal case and cause are matters which cannot be done effectively in the heat of the campaign proper. The dawning realisation that each failure on our part to check the integrationist tide owes its origins to tactical errors ought not to distract from the need for a more strategic approach.

The Establishment’s success in advancing its cause is due, in large part, to that very establishment status, and not merely to its vastly superior funding through the political parties themselves as well as taxpayers money. Year in, year out, a corrosive propaganda effort is conducted on behalf of the Union, which serves to implant certain basic attitudes in the public mind that cannot easily, or quickly, be dissipated in the few weeks normally available before polling day. Many of these attitudes are inculcated on an almost subconscious level, and may only be intended to effect in part their indisputable result. Among the most palpable is the public’s acceptance of the inevitability of dependence; that is, that it is impossible to do anything without money from and/or the approval of Brussels. Ironically the incompetence of the Establishment in conducting those affairs, which still remain exclusively within their sphere, plays some considerable part in popularising dependency. After all, it seems plausible to suggest that European governance could not, even with malicious intent, be worse.

In any case, the constant message of the “inevitability” of the European Super State is subtly, and not so subtly drummed, into the minds of the people ceaselessly. It is something that cannot be easily contradicted by people that the ordinary citizen only ever hears about every few years. Ray Crotty’s stand in the European parliamentary elections seemed to be the beginning of recognising this important flaw. Had he been elected, it would have been possible to have a prominent and critical voice concerning European affairs not restricted to major Treaty alterations. Of course, he was not elected, though he polled well, and the idea was allowed to fade. Thought should have been given to the reasons for his failing, since he had adopted for the first time a real strategy. Indeed, the only one which in the long run can deliver success. The Establishment being wholly for the Union, it follows inevitably that, so long as they continue to control our relations with Europe, no other possibility but the Federalist option can be explored. The key lies in weakening the grip of the current incumbents on all aspects of policy, before a genuine alternative can be considered.

Let us imagine, for one moment, that the Irish people had accepted the position put forward by the Constitutional Rights Campaign - that the Single European Act

ought to be renegotiated to take account of Ireland's special needs. Who would we send to renegotiate? Surely not the same persons who had negotiated the original flawed Treaty? How, in fairness, could they - even if they were willing - credibly approach the other Heads of Government and say that the Treaty, which they had just spent the previous weeks lauding to the heavens, was now so thoroughly unacceptable that it must be revised? Even if they did so, what would they change in a document of which they were so recently proud?

A rejection of the referenda would be a *de facto* rejection of the further encroachment of the EU into Irish affairs and, as such, to have sent committed Federalists back to negotiating table, to re-design the Treaties to take account of that basic concern, would be folly indeed. At best, they would have come back to the Irish people with the same miserable trick played upon the Danes, declarations of meaningless value and, crucially, no legal standing. The very survival of the Establishment in this country is predicated on our continued and growing dependence. It follows that, if the time came when any Federal advance were checked, that behind the actual referendum result would have to lie the determination of a Government committed to effecting the will of the people. In practical terms that means that if we are not to have the popular intent negated by sophistries and lies, government needs necessarily to be composed of wholly new people. It is this fact that might have made Ray Crotty's election the beginning of something really meaningful.

The reasons why he lost are obvious, and not nearly so intractable as they first appear. It was certainly not that the range of successful candidates were of such statesman-like stature as to have been irresistible, but that they had the enduring advantage of the "party machine", as well as a particular form of name recognition that was decisive. They were domestic politicians and fought their campaigns on domestic issues, which called forth loyalties having nothing whatever to do with European politics as such, but which impacted more forcefully with an electorate inclined still to view Brussels, even in the context of its own parliamentary election, as a faraway place about which they knew little and cared less. Contrariwise, Ray Crotty ran on European issues and, though his name was well known, it was almost exclusively associated with opposition to the Treaty of Rome and the S.E.A. Not even all of those who had agreed with him on those question were ever likely to forsake party affiliations to vote for him in a personality-centred election. Clearly, a coup of the magnitude he sought to pull off had to be prepared by local organisations working ceaselessly on the ground for months, even years, in advance. No such organisation existed, and sadly no such organisation exists today. The groups which had fought the referenda have, for the most part, no place outside that role, or are at other times concerned with entirely different and not always very popular things. Organisationally they failed to strike roots of any depth and exist today as the same lists for future campaigns, but neither as permanent pressure groups nor, what might be even more significant, as power holders in their own right within national political life. Clearly what was and is all the more required today is a structure lasting beyond the immediacy of the campaign, and the sponsorship of persons and/or organisations which possessed a real national presence. To the objection that no such person exists,

it is then a task of greatest import that he/she, or preferably they, be found and organisation built around and by them; or that an organisation be built that will effectively create the persons of necessary gravitas.

The conclusions drawn from this brief, but dismal, chronology of twenty seven years of defeat, even with prescriptions for the most obvious causes, indicate a situation of the poorest odds. It is one thing to see what might be done, entirely another to do them. Can one conceive a more unlikely cause than that we should seek to create an organisation in opposition to the whole of the entrenched Establishment, one capable of formulating a single agreed programme, founded on dour honesty and rejecting all compromise? The very acceptance of the necessity seems to inflate one's pessimism, since it seems as impossible as it is vital. Yet events have a way of turning out which always open up new avenues for manoeuvre, and while the cliché that things are never darkest before the dawn is gross, perhaps more usefully we may have regard to the many precedents that suggest that an enemy is never more vulnerable than when he feels final victory approaching. Certainly, it is at the precise moment when a project is nearing completion that the counter pressures are strained most, and the enemy confident of what is almost in his grasp is most likely to underestimate exactly those pressures which may yet snatch it away. The Euro-Federalist project is no different. At the very moment when all the strings appear to finally be gathered in one hand, arrogance of an outrageous form has replaced the duplicitous care of yesteryear and excited a flurry of discontent all across the continent. What had previously been masked is now openly paraded, and the prospective citizens of the new Superstate do not like what they see.

In the mid 1980's, the Federalists seriously toyed with popularising the European Ideal, feeling that, with careful propaganda and well chosen presentation, they could instill a real sense of European 'identity' in the American style. The S.E.A. was an expression of this sentiment of confidence, in that it was remarkably short for a legal document of its significance, and being both widely available and generally understandable to the average European. As such, it made no secret of its effect and intent in taking the Community well beyond its Common Market origins, where firstly free trade had been replaced by the Single Market, which was something quite different. More importantly, it dealt with foreign policy co-operation, which amounted to the beginnings of a nation state concept of Europe as an entity. It did not pretend to do otherwise. In being so forthright, the planners had for the first time tested the waters of public opinion on a project they had in any case been quietly constructing for many years. Indeed, even before the inception of the Community. The test results were broadly inconclusive, although some signs of warning were surely noted in the necessity to sell the Act in both Ireland and Denmark almost exclusively in terms of national self-interest. Hardly a promising beginning for the European identity. Elsewhere, there were muted grumblings which did not have access to the ballot box and could, consequently, only be estimated. Caution, however, was advised.

When the same planners came to draw up Maastricht, they were still confident enough of their popular position, but sought to cover the tracks somewhat by constructing an enormously complex Treaty, which was thereby inaccessible to the

layman. In doing so, however, they failed to grasp the psychology of their audience. Having once alerted people with the S.E.A., all Europe knew at least the general intent, and any attempt at this stage to cloak the project was bound to backfire.

The Federalists having designed an unwieldy and quagmirish Treaty of Union, by way of concealing the full extent of its purposes, then proceeded to attempt the now impossible task of popularising it. Even the politically unaware suspect that when politicians and lawyers conspire to create an obscure document, it must have little to do with the interests of the common man. The cat was now well and truly out of the bag, and all across the continent a simple concept began to catch on - that European Federalism was not for the common man. Thereafter, it would only be possible to advance entirely by deception, which even in modern times is a very difficult thing to do with complete success. After all, how was one supposed to hide the obvious signs of growing integration? The real motivation behind the endeavour had been shown up, and now everything would give rise to suspicion.

Clearly, the idea of generating a great public upsurge enthusiastic for the Union, which would sweep away the remaining voices for caution, was absurd. Worse still, those voices had acquired a new and attentive audience. Nonetheless, much had already been done to lay the foundations and, by a mixture of bluff and intrigue, it was possible to secure the passage of the Treaty, despite the rough water in France and Denmark. The Union thus established could become technically, if not popularly, accepted. It would push forward by imposition through the powers granted by the Treaties without recourse again to any electorate, certainly not until such time as the fully fledged Federal State could be presented as a *fait accompli*.

It is, so to say, a good plan, and for people for whom idealism has given way to sober reality, it is really quite ingenious that they had preserved such a back up arrangement. However, it is likely that they are to find that the genie once out of the bottle is not so easily put back in. To a certain extent, they were always in trouble anyway, in the sense that the late Eighties and Nineties saw a rise in the support for what the System likes to disparage as the "Far Right", but which is in fact nothing more complex than the return to mainstream politics of the principles of the National Idea. No amount of vitriolic abuse by media merchants is likely to cause this phenomena to wane any time soon, and it is far more plausible to suggest that it has reached nowhere near its heights. It may even be argued that, given the populist roots of this movement, it positively feeds off media abuse, and that all that they are achieving is a bolstering of the credibility of these parties as the true parties of opposition. This new movement has profound implications for the Federalist project, since though it did not arise even primarily as a reaction to Europeanism, it has nonetheless become reactionary to it and wholeheartedly so in a way which goes much further than the Euro-scepticism of, say, the Tory party which carries the baggage of responsibility for Britain's original entry.

This movement has the power to engage in constant confrontation with the federalists analysing, criticising and condemning their every move at this critical juncture and, more importantly, giving focus and direction to alternatives, which is the only way to counteract the gradualism which might otherwise be inevitable. If

you consider that the federal project was created in the absence of this concerted opposition, and that it foundered to some extent of its own volition without this obstacle, then it becomes more obvious the grave danger that it poses to the Federalists, and the great hope this broad, if intangible, movement holds out for the freedom of the peoples of Europe.

Already the efforts of the various Establishments of Europe to meet the convergence criteria for Monetary Union raised a chorus of disapproval from their own people, which would have been unthinkable even a decade ago. The further suffering required to achieve the Superstate has virtually no popular support. When the failure of the Single Currency to spread the economic benefits evenly between the States becomes apparent, as it must quite quickly, then it is likely to fuel further discontent with the Federal idea as such, and to replace (or coalesce with) immigration as the great rallying issue for Nationalists in Europe. Persons adverse to their agenda even now will come to see them, and them alone, as the bulwark of the National Idea which, of course, they have always been. In spite of what the media may tell you, a Front Nationale-led government in France is not only not impossible, but in this scenario becomes extremely likely - to the point where only they themselves can cause their own failure, by splintering or some kind of sell out. Even in this scenario, the Establishment parties are bound to take greater account of public unease, which will necessarily slow the Federal project. It cannot afford to be slowed, since such a slow down would as likely effect its demise.

We may hope that such is the case. We may hope that the political structures of Europe remain flexible enough to facilitate the demise of the federalist idea in a peaceful and democratic manner. For any attempt to bolster the Union by coercion will, in the end, require the use of force, and the use of force in any fashion will inevitably get out of hand. In this context, it is unfortunate, and more than a little sinister, that there is no mechanism in any of the European treaties for a withdrawal by any State or group of States from the obligations imposed by them. There is certainly an assumption by the peoples of Europe that their countries membership of the Union is entirely voluntary, and yet there exists no provision in European law stating the voluntary nature of membership once each stage had been ratified. We may hope that this was merely an oversight on the part of the planners for whom the whole notion of withdrawal was literally unthinkable, and so in consequence they never thought to provide for it. If such is not the case, then the absence of a withdrawal mechanism amounts to a thinly veiled threat of unspecified retaliation, and it would be naive to assume that such retaliation would be confined to the economic.

It would be a cruel irony, indeed, if the great claim of the Federalists to have kept the peace of Europe since the Second World War were to give way to a secessionist war beside whose horrors the American Civil War would be a pale comparison. One cannot help but feel, however, that, though such a secession might be completed quite calmly and peacefully right now, in the coming years the Federalists will have grown more, not less, arrogant, and would in fact prefer to draw the Continent into a conflagration rather than allow their carefully laid plans to come to nought. It would then fall to a question of greater force as to whether Europe was to be free or enslaved

to that bureaucratic nightmare; that is to say, it would be a question of how many States sought to secede, as against how many were willing to attempt to prevent them by physical force. A fairly even balance would be, of course, the very worst circumstance since that would provide for a violent stand-off.

In any case, the Federal project has throughout the Maastricht debate, and the whole controversy of Monetary Union in Britain and elsewhere, been revealed as the imposition of a Master Scheme, which owes nothing either to common sense or popular mandate. As such, no matter how far it progresses it is fatally flawed at its core. There never was much about the project which impressed itself upon any but the most materialistic of minds, and financial materialism at that. Clearly, there was very little thought given to the ancient traditions of European Nationhood, nor did those planners, who put their minds to it, understand that these traditions, quite apart from their inherent value, had within them the material power to upset their limited materialistic calculations. Though the facts of the case have not yet reached mainstream debate in this country, the European project is already coming apart at the seams. National rivalries are re-asserting themselves as never before, and the real danger is that, by pushing the European States together, we are preparing a cataclysm which will set them apart more fundamentally than ever before. It may well be that the Federal project is now the single greatest obstacle to a form of developmental co-operation between these sovereign states, which is very much more desirable as well as more practical.

We will have to find ourselves a way out of it at some stage, and in practice this is easier done sooner rather than later. For our own part in Ireland, the difficulties are all the greater in being both a relatively small country and having developed an economy heavily reliant on foreign trade, not to mention the multi-national corporate base of that economy being fragile in the face of any sign of political upheaval. Crucially, it is not a matter of choice *per se*. It is no longer tenable to suppose that the current direction of national and European policy is sustainable, and the further extension of ourselves along its path only makes the problem more intractable for the time when a solution is unavoidably necessitated.

Ireland, alone among the member states, had the bitter recent experience of monetary union, which ought to have served as a warning, and even that union was softened in its evil consequences by being accompanied by fiscal union. However, the experience should, nonetheless, have some value now in showing, in the first instance, that liberation from the straitjacket of such a union is not impossible; in the second, any delay in enacting the full consequences of the decision to break the union only further exacerbates the damage done. As such, as soon as the decision is made to move decisively, there is no reason to suppose that a national government would have any difficulty in drawing up the detailed plan required. Everything is possible if we only wish hard enough.

Above, we referred to the need for a positive programme and that with the understanding that such a programme could only succeed by seeking to rally Nationalists. It must be obvious that, following the Maastricht referendum and the almost total absence of such forces in the Amsterdam treaty debate, that Nationalists will not rally against Europe on the abortion issue, nor even against the liberal social

agenda. Absurd though it is, many otherwise sound people attempt to differentiate between the two, despite the now well documented connection. In any case, the moral or religious forces show no signs of being anything other than a perpetual minority, capable of rallying a significant, but not decisive, number when they are opposed by all other forces in the State. Moreover, there is at the core of this approach a philosophical flaw. After all, instead of trying to isolate Ireland from European liberal trends, is it not equally valid to suggest that a campaign might centre on the restoration of traditional Christian values throughout Europe? If we are to believe that this is impossible, then it is to believe in fact that it is only a matter of time before the battle is lost in Ireland as well, for we will have surrendered to the notion that once a country has gone liberal, it cannot thereafter be saved. This is surely not the case.

There must be a more fundamental reason for opposing European Federalism than this, a reason which does not require everlasting conflict with our neighbours but which, on the other hand, declares the impossibility of political union forever. That reason is the National Idea. This is the belief that the sovereignty of the Irish nation is not merely the only way to secure peace and freedom for our people, but that it is the best way. Contrary to the politically correct modernist trends, this remains just as solidly true today as it was when the same notion was juxtaposed to the Imperial idea of previous centuries. We will, of course, come across the question of the superiority of the Nation State as a political form repeatedly, as we review all the matters which confront the Irish nation. It will become clearer that no form of foreign government, however benevolently constituted, can really achieve the best interest of the Irish people as could a native Irish government. The fact that we have not, heretofore, had such a native government has obscured this point, which might otherwise have been as obvious as it was to the Irish patriots of preceding centuries.

It naturally follows from this that the programme must be of greater scope than an anti-Federalist one. It must encompass all of the great national questions, which flow not only from rejecting the Establishment's European policy, but from rejecting the Establishment itself. We are talking of an alternative government but, as will become clearer as this book progresses, we are talking about something even more ambitious. We are talking about an alternative conception of government, not only of personnel, but of Attitude, Form and Action. This is no small project but, reason and experience suggest, no other viable option exists in the long run, and it will be very much easier, paradoxically, to do than anything which currently seems more sensible.



The Collapse Of The Conservative Caucus.

Ireland is unique in Europe, and possibly the Western world, insofar as its dominant political parties have, since their inception, deliberately avoided ideological definition, preferring to regard themselves as great encompassers of diverse opinions and interests. In other words, presuming to be all things to all men. True enough, political debate in any country you mention is conducted within the very narrow parameters of what has come to be termed Liberal Capitalist Democracy, and as such the differences are more apparent than real. Yet they at least claim to be different: conservative, liberal, socialist and so on. These terms, at least, have some meaning and some variation, however slight in practice. Perhaps, then, we are more honest for we make no such pretence. We elect the managers of consensus with no appreciable variation at all. For Fianna Fail, in particular, party adherents have raised the idea to almost mythological proportions and still to this day, although increasingly implausible, try to pass off this mediocre grouping as "*the great national movement*".

The result, whether or not foreseen, has been an issue-based public discourse, as fluid as today's headlines, upon which no solid ground can be formed. Perhaps this is our collective national punishment for a Civil War fought, on the one hand, on behalf of a foreign power against a group of naysayers, who really had no idea what they would do differently if they won, as by party political means they later did. In any case, a nation willing to fight a bloody internecine war, without any concrete conception of *why*, was bound, as by the law of gravity, to form party political structures equally devoid of direction. The consequences for our day are manifold and universally destructive.

The main rivals in the political field were founded on an argument of no modern relevance as such and, consequently, are maintained largely on petty ambition and personal malice. Personal malice has carried down to each new generation, only somewhat diluted, to the point where those parties now exist primarily for the purpose of expressing it though merely verbally. Their current members have no idea why they are members of this rather than that party, while their upper echelons hardly bother to conceal their career orientation. This is not to say that apparachnik ambitions do not fuel the party systems elsewhere in Europe, only that in Ireland, it has never been otherwise and never even pretended to be. For the small number really interested in the welfare of the nation, and possessed of some notion as to how to go about it, a foray into the quagmire of party political activity is a dismal and sobering experience.

At the most local level, there seems to be an almost totally blank mind. No one gives any credence to arguments founded on a genuine regard for the national interest as if that had nothing to do with them. Party policy, insofar as it is discussed at all, is relevant only to the extent of its popularity or ease of sale, and ought to be changed if deemed electorally necessary whatever the merits of any given position. Moreover, it must be subject to the narrow limits externally imposed. That is to say,

details are debatable, but all else is received. The only questions exciting any passion are personal ones. The entire proceedings at local cumainn level take on really hilarious proportions when one becomes acquainted, as the observant member inevitably does, with its total detachment from reality.

Perhaps, to some party members, it really is believable that they are contributing to the democratic process and that someone up there cares what they think. The fact that their parliamentary parties, with increasing regularity, ignore, and sometimes with ill disguised contempt, motions passed at their annual Ard Fheis seems to do nothing to dampen their enthusiasm for being part of the process. Actually there is no particular reason why it should, given that having joined without any firm convictions or motivation, it is nearly impossible to conceive of a “why” and “when” for leaving.

On a national level, the parties do have to come up with some functional purpose, however, and, consequently, have the unenviable task of taking positions on each public issue. For the party which speaks first, this is particularly hazardous since it is not known how the public will react, and there is the added need to be semi-original. The party which speaks second can just disagree *pro forma*. Within an ideological frame of reference this might not seem too arduous, but thinking up ideas without any basis whatsoever is no mean feat.

Tackling, for example, the question of privatisation, when you have no fixed attitude to the role of the State in the economy, is a nerve racking journey into triple layered semantics. On the one side, you want to appear principled and determined as a force for action. On the other hand, maintaining the *status quo* or proposing radical change have their problems, electorally-speaking, since that is the only measure of “success” or “failure”.

You have to say something, but you cannot really say anything. The result is that, amid a barrage of noise from both sides of the House, every effort is turned to changing as little as possible, while at the same time appearing to change the whole nature of everything; yet maintaining the capacity to use an opt out clause later, which states that you really didn't change anything - at least, nothing that the opposition would not also have changed, or not have changed as the case may be. Confused? Well that's the idea!

That the political process is in large part conducted by persons, who have no idea what they are doing, would in itself be harmless enough if they were alone in there. The tendency towards saving one's seat above all else might, for example, lead politicians of unoriginal hue to mind their own business and, in consequence, actually be beneficial to the nation on balance. The people could then get on with their own lives with the minimum of hindrance and be all the better for it. Inevitably, however, the absence of stated ideology is not the absence of ideology as such, merely that many of the adherents of the Establishment line are unaware of it. Insofar as there are those who are aware of the reality, they either don't understand it, or pursue it in an unstated and concealed fashion.

The parties of the declared Left aside, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are themselves manipulated by leftists precisely because the vast majority of their

membership is not consciously ideological. As experience bears out, a small group, with a clear idea of what they want, can dominate a much larger group with no ideas at all, and direct the whole for their own purposes. It is beyond question that, whatever the private opinions of the ordinary membership or even the majority of their parliamentary parties, both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are firmly within the grasp of their most liberal elements with all that follows from that.

The manner in which this Liberal ascendancy was formed is depressingly predictable. After all, there is no person more easily subjected to manipulation than one who has no framework of basic principles through which to view events as they unfold. Such a person is at the mercy of newspaper articles and trite, received opinion, waiting to be told what to think, say and do by anyone with any definite idea. He or she is not likely either to be particularly courageous in defence of what they might genuinely believe, since it is impossible for them to place their view in a context which alone gives firmness and resolve.

Inevitably, this leads to the lamentable media driven politics, which has been an increasing feature of modern life, not just in Ireland. We are left with a decision-making process, which is largely in the hands of broadcasters and newspaper editors, working sometimes in open concert with the Liberal militant tendency within the various party organisations. The career politician is, by necessity, obsessed with the retention of his place, and the instinct for self preservation becomes bloated out of all proportion. The media editor, being the controller of received opinion, sets the agenda since he alone decides what is, or is not, an important issue. The amount of media attention afforded gives it its significance in the public and, by extension, the political mind.

That such media editors have abused their privileged position, and done so with increasing disregard for even the pretence of objectivity, has shaped the entire political agenda from Divorce to Unemployment. They have done so with a liberal slant now approaching vertical, which has ensured "*a go along to get along*" atmosphere of acquiescence to the Liberal onslaught in Dail Eireann, and to some extent within the country as a whole.

With thinly veiled contempt for the general public, they have assaulted the eye and ear daily with the most outlandish and scurrilous abuse of cherished traditional values, depicting the traditional view of things as variously dull-witted, oafish, unsophisticated - country foolishness with no grasp of the "*new progressive idealism*" which marks the other, *imagined*, forward-looking European societies. The clichéd Irish solution to an Irish problem is trotted out regularly to encourage the public to think badly of something, without reference to what the words actually mean. They would have an English solution to an Irish problem? Notwithstanding the underlying contempt for the general public, and in particular their generally sound instincts on certain social issues, we are treated to opinion polls which "reveal" that the vast majority are in agreement with the most liberal line on any given question, in spite of the contrary experience of ordinary people discussing these matters amongst themselves.

It is easy to see how such a stranglehold on public discourse has its effect on a fickle political structure. Without ideology, the only motivation is the next General Election. That means acquiring positive media exposure through the production of

statements and views within the narrow limits the media has decided is relevant, and opinions within the slim range of what they have decided is acceptable. Given that this agenda setting is accompanied by doctored polling, the timorous public representative is caught between a rock and the liberal place. The party which steps so much as one foot outside what is deemed politically correct will be informed by flashing newspaper headlines just how unpopular they have become, *mar dheá*.

Within the parties too, we have our determined liberals who have beavered away for years, not to say some decades, with serious minded intent to hollow out the system, and replace any courage or principle with the mush of cowardice on the one hand, and where possible, hard bigotry on the other. Their success has been startling and ought to have awakened patriots earlier - but then little is as it should be in Ireland. One could have predicted the emergence of characters like Michael McDowell, Liz O'Donnell or even Jimmy McDaid and the ground was well prepared for Democratic Left, but traditional Ireland was asleep.

Moreover, traditional Ireland was afraid to call itself *traditional*, baulking at the notion of reducing the politics of all encompassing national movements with the dirty task of actually believing in something. While their opponents were plodding away with slow, painstakingly careful action in the dialectical two steps forward, one step back mode, patriots, still overwhelmingly representative of the country at large, were slow to notice the disappearance of their advocates on the benches of Dail and Seanad Eireann. They had never asked their advocates to declare as such and so did not distinguish the careerist from the committed, the latter never having been very numerous.

When Mary Robinson was elected President, however much she may have achieved this by concealing her record during the actual campaign, it ought to have sent shock waves throughout traditional Ireland, just as it had released jubilation and not unfounded optimism on the other side. They slept on, however, and the X case was their reward. Even now the full import of what happened throughout the Eighties, in particular, has not hit home with many, and they proceed to round up the usual tactics without an inkling that their day has well and truly passed.

The X case and its *de jure* legalisation of abortion revealed many a politician in his true colours. One might be forgiven for confidently predicting that all those politicians, who had been so eager to join the Amendment bandwagon just ten years ago, would now be stalwart defenders of the Right to Life in this crisis, but almost to a man they jumped ship like rats. Even, it might be said, the loudest of the 1983 pro-lifers were now the most vociferous in pushing for abortion, and as quickly as possible. A flood began toward the enactment of the Liberal agenda with the Masstrict lie being pronounced on every side of the House and the confidence trick referenda which followed shortly after. Perversion of the lowest form was legalised without even a vote, and Euthanasia, through the Supreme Court, passed without political comment. The advertisement and promotion of child murder is now allowed. And then cross-party consensus, not to mention the illegal use of public funds, was used to bludgeon in Divorce. These are, it should be noted, only the most obvious among many other actions which have pushed this country far from its foundations onto the sandy soil of new "freedom".

How did it happen? Where have the patriots gone? In large part, this is missing the point entirely and the extent to which Catholic Nationalism, such as it exists in this country, has swallowed illusions bodes ill for the future. The great Catholic era in Ireland is, for the most part, a Liberal invention to begin with. It never really happened or, at least, not in the all pervasive and monolithic fashion in which it has been portrayed. They would have us believe that at one time this country was ruled by reactionary, narrow-minded Catholics, whose intrusive and domineering influence was imposed on the Irish people through fear and ignorance. While disputing, of course, the evil effects of such influence many modern conservatives seem to accept in unison that such did exist, which is simply not true as even the most cursory examination of the facts easily reveals. The mythology itself is so caricatured as not to be serious.

According to received wisdom, the high point of Catholic domination was the 1950's. Very clever use is made of this in choosing a period of economic depression, high emigration and general fatalistic despair to demonise as the high watermark of traditional power. Never mind that, apart from anything else, social trends do not work that way, it is never darkest before the dawn, since excepting times of major upheaval, social trends move inexorably and usually slowly in one direction, and Ireland is no exception. The 1950's were less Catholic than the 40's, obviously, since the process of secularisation began at the very least with the foundation of the State. Yet the liberals would blame the Church for the Famine if such could be rendered plausible, and indeed some have sought to do just that.

As with all such fallacious tales, it fits vaguely and, to the unthinking, completely with the facts. After all, Ireland under British rule was essentially, for legal purposes, a Protestant State, insofar as religion played any role. Its laws reflected a Protestant and secular ethos, wholly foreign in both origin and application to the Irish circumstance. It goes without saying that the new Free State would frame its laws in a more Catholic fashion than theretofore. In the minds of the anti-religious, this would necessarily present itself as a crude throwback, lending credibility to otherwise infantile recriminations concerning medievalism and other such nonsense. The 1937 Constitution, framed by the DeValera government, would also present itself as imperiously Catholic in comparison to the "West British" nature of what immediately preceded it. All of which is to mistake appearance for substance, a recurring theme in Irish political analysis.

Having regard to the overwhelming Catholic majority in the country at the time, and the limited, as then, insidious propaganda, it would have been unthinkable for any Irish government to have done less. In point of fact what is extraordinary is how little influence Catholic theology and ethos had in the formation of the Constitution and in State policy as such, given the makeup of the Irish population. Certain things have been quietly forgotten, which is to say ignored. The 1937 Constitution is far from being the unashamedly Catholic document that might have been expected, and such was not lost on the Vatican or the hierarchy of the time, who made no secret of their dissatisfaction. The sober observer will note that both this document and the general direction of policy was as secularised as it could possibly have been hoped to get away with. In the end, the Church's muttering acquiescence was achieved by the threat, Albert Reynolds style, of a much worse alternative. Even then, Cardinal

McRory's outspoken rejection almost succeeded having it defeated at the ballot. The application of modern thinking adds nothing to an objective analysis.

Article 44 is a pointer. Imagine a so-called Catholic Constitution whose only reference to the Church was to "recognise" it as the majority Church. A mere recognition of what was obvious. Of course, it was the majority Church, and even in the democratic sense, it followed that it ought to have its Social Teaching incorporated in a definite role in State policy, but no such guarantee was made. In the separation of Church and State, this surely is a milestone. Yet it was this innocuous Article, which so raised the ire of secularist Liberals that it had to be removed and that with the willing, not to say cringing collaboration, of a very different subsequent hierarchy, which had latterly lost confidence in itself and its true purpose.

Insofar as certain other Articles reflected Catholic social thinking, they did so in that obtuse and unclear fashion that leads to fanciful re-interpretation à la X.

In this context too, much is made of the mythological role of the Church in the collapse of the first inter-party government. How little is made of the overt Marxism of the author of the Mother and Child scheme, or of the Catholic alternatives that might have been introduced, but weren't even considered by this man. It is really shocking even with all else that goes on in Ireland today to note the sheer extent to which the liberals are willing and able to play fast and loose with the truth of this story. Some of the wilder conspiracy theories have it that the Church, which at that time provided most of the hospitals, objected really on the grounds that they would lose money. Truth told, behind the façade of a scheme purporting to ensure health care for ante and post natal mothers and their children - itself a laudable endeavour publicly praised by the Church - came the encroaching hand of the State, seeking to perform the most investigative of physical examinations upon both the mothers and children of the nation, with or without consent. Anyway, how Catholic is a country's politics, when a man like Noel Browne becomes a Minister in the first place?

Every instance of so-called Church dominance reveals, behind the headlines, a reality of sober pause as we grasp the limits of such power in a State in which it might have expected much more. At all times, since the foundation of the Irish State, we find there has been an exclusion of the Church to the maximum extent possible, within the confines of a populace deeply respectful of its religion and practice, and the need to keep it docile and on side. If, occasionally, the rhetoric was Catholic, where were the facts? The process of secularisation has taken place exactly as one might expect, slowly at first, carefully cloaking the true and final intent, until it had picked up sufficient momentum to be, in the view of its originators, unstoppable.

The beginning of the 60's were far from being the dawn of new directions; rather was it the culmination and open display of power gathered over previous decades. The "dark" days of the 50's might well have been the Church's most opportune moment to effect a resistance, but hardly the high point of a power that had long since passed. We might, more properly, say that when the moral fibre of the nation was more solidly formed by Catholic faith and thinking, and when the Church itself insisted more fully than today upon its rights, that at least we had some barrier against the all-encroaching and overwhelming power of the State. That there was the organised

power of the State, founded upon essentially secularist and humanist principles, set against the organised power of the Church speaking in defence of the basic and natural law rights of the people, is a fact. The subsequent relative decline of the Church has heralded unrestricted access by officialdom into even the most private aspects of the lives of individuals, who now stand alone.

So, talking of the collapse of the traditional caucus within Dail Eireann, as if it were a recent phenomenon, is mere fantasy. It had already ceased to exist for all practical purposes, at least insofar as its ability to influence legislation bore no relation whatever inside the Oireachtas to its residual force within the instincts of the public at large. The liberals have unquestionably foisted upon the Irish people, from the beginning, as much as they could be expected to stomach at any given time. The rear-guard defenders that patriots put forward were, for the most part, characters of an unreliable sort, seeking short term political advantage, but at no stage seriously intent on halting, much less reversing, the deleterious trend.

While Ireland remained, as the PC would have it, "behind" Western Europe it might have been possible to ignore this, or explain it away, but to do so now would be fatal; in the case of abortion in a very real sense. Irish Nationalism alone has failed in Europe to find itself parliamentary champions willing and determined to take the necessary risks, which are required for resisting the most abhorrent of modern trends. Instead, it placed its optimism on the wild cards of careerists motivated by common selfishness and consequently cowardice. Nationalists have become conservatives with a small "c", preferring to confine themselves to a safe form of advocacy which compromises itself with a System already nauseatingly rotten.

Not surprisingly, all the great victories of that form of polite politics have, in one way or another, proved pyrrhic in the end. For example, the resistance to the first contraceptive bill in 1973, while ultimately successful in the narrow sense, was so thoroughly bungled as to ensure the inevitability, sooner rather than later, of our current laws. Why the defensive posture? Why could we not have been forthright in promoting the positive nature of large families and population growth, both in the lives of individuals and the health of the nation? Instead we had weakly pious moralism and, of course, the fatal compromise with the contraceptive mentality inherent in the unlimited advocacy of "*Natural Family Planning*". Of course, it was because, although political pressure might be brought to bear in a limited fashion by the threat of lost Catholic votes, without committed believers a positive alternative could not be presented. Moreover, when the immediate fuss had passed, the media set about its work unhindered by any organised response to undermine the weak-kneed position adopted. When the McGee decision was announced, we acquiesced and for the most part the Dail was silent. By the time even more liberal legislation was presented, the argument was over and, of course, abortion was bound to follow. There again action was limited by a fundamental lack of confidence. The PLAC, while organisationally speaking one of the most effective political advocacy groups ever formed in Ireland nonetheless presupposed that the people were on the level of political beggars of favours. The debate over whether even in principle the Irish people would be allowed the opportunity to defend the very lives of their children dragged on for years, though

it was the overwhelming will of the nation. Suppose just for a moment that the party political situation at the time had not been so volatile, with advantage being sought by career minded politicians intent on using the issue to further personal and party ambition? Would the amendment have been possible at all? As it was, didn't we get one which sober observers at the time noted was open to the very opposite of its intent in the hands of a hostile Supreme Court? Yet we imagined ourselves on a height because Fianna Fail were on our side. We didn't note that the only persons who took political risks at the time were on the "No" side. Their willingness to take that risk was a pointer to their growing confidence that we missed entirely. Again, when the campaign as such was over, the pseudo-conservatives fell silent, while the liberals set about the task of undoing our efforts.

In the 1986 Divorce referendum, Fianna Fail did not even bother to align themselves, yet we imagined them the great conservative party. They were on our side "deep down", the champions as ever of the easily won cause. What kind of victory is it anyway simply to prevent the worst from happening? Any fool could have told you that the issue would not go away while the political structures remained in the hands of its advocates. Two thirds of the nation found themselves, as ever, begging favours from cowards who represented no-one but themselves, while the Liberal conspiracy went merrily ahead, propagandised from without and advocated arrogantly from within Dail Eireann. So much for all the powers of government deriving from the people under God. Far from being shattered by their defeat in the Divorce referendum, the "progressives" proceeded quickly to consolidate their position, noting full well as we had not, that no party had forthrightly defended the majority view. For the first time, the door was open for sweeping legislative changes without regard to public opinion, which would in any case be anaesthetised as much as possible by a sympathetic media. Much could now be unashamedly done.

Moreover, there was a new and even more potent axe to wield against the uncommitted politician: European law. The effects of Ireland's membership of the European Union are not fully known, but there can be no doubt at least that the obligations already imposed are far reaching and probably considerably more so than will ever be admitted. Certainly, it has been established by the peculiar wording of the Maastricht amendment that the Irish Constitution is definitely not the supreme law of the land, being superseded in all and every case by European law. This question, long contentious, has been settled.

When one sees the effects, even just of the so-called equality directives, as they have played out in Irish legislation and everyday life, the enormity is obvious. The sensible person, however, must understand that what is obvious is no more than the tip of an iceberg that is the whole truth. A great deal of behind doors bargaining is being concealed. If we have recognised the dependency of the politically and morally bankrupt Establishment, it follows that we cannot ignore the corollary social consequence. In point of fact, the practice of political expediency within the national context ought to have dictated a much slower process of reform, if such it can be called. Pointedly the European dimension has set a much more rapid pace. How many of the events of the past years have been dictated by foreign interests and concerns we will never fully know, but

we can make an educated guess. If we exclude all other explanations as impossible, whatever remains, however fantastic, must nonetheless be the truth.

So if it is the intention of the European Union to form itself into a federal state of the American type, and explicitly now it is, then it will require a great deal more uniformity than can be achieved by economic initiative alone. Thus, a federal state cannot for long sustain the notion that a fundamental right in one region can be a crime punishable in another. When the European Court of Human Rights heard the Norris case concerning homosexual perversion, for example, and deemed Ireland's, in any case, unenforced law in this area, to be a breach of "human rights", they set a precedent which must go far beyond the case in point. When the Irish government legislated in accordance with that judgement and in effect legalised and legitimised the practise of buggery and gross indecency, they too set a precedent. In all aspects of social law, there would be a uniformity within the E.U., and the standard set would be the lowest common denominator. It was hardly electoral expediency that motivated the silence on this most unpopular measure, yet there were not even enough voices in the Dail to force a vote.

Considering the question further, on the abortion issue specifically, a pattern becomes evident. During the protracted negotiations on the Maastricht Treaty, the issue of Ireland's "anachronistic" laws must have come up. Article 40.3,3 certainly did as the protocol reveals. According to received opinion, the protocol was designed by Irish Pro-Lifers to protect the ban on abortion here and, on the face of it, it appeared to do so. But how likely is this really? Remember, if you will, that the Pro-Life Campaign, as well as all other Pro-life representatives, were and are excluded from the corridors of meaningful power in a very public and humiliating way from the emergence of the X case onwards. Remember that the X challenge to the Constitution was made possible only by government collaboration in bearing the expenses and in the thesis that 40.3,3 totally prohibited abortion being undefended by the Attorney General. How plausible then is it to suggest that the leadership of the PLC was intimately and influentially involved in the negotiations on a major international Treaty just months before?

How much more believable that the protocol was in fact designed to ensure the introduction of abortion? That is to say, if the protocol copperfastens the Amendment then if one could have predicted the X decision, one could also have predicted its copperfastening of legal abortion. Further, if one realises that the European Union could not accept a legal definition of the unborn child as having the full right to life as other citizens in Ireland, and as a disposable nothingness in the remainder of the Union, then the picture approaches some clarity.

Of course, the X case was inevitable, and those intimately acquainted with the sitting Supreme Court would have known in advance its outcome and, by extension, the real effects of the protocol. In this instance, however, the European Union could not be held responsible for abortion in Ireland. Irish pro-lifers could be blamed for that. The protocol would moreover wash any future Irish government's hands of responsibility, since they would be able to say that nothing can be done with Article 40.3,3 because of the protocol. Responsibility, it can be plausibly argued, lies with the unaccountable Supreme Court.

The point could not fail to have been impressed on Irish negotiators of the Treaty that abortion must at some stage be legalised in Ireland if we were to be full members of the Union and so now it is. No Irish government committed to the European idea, as it presently stands, can afford to rock the boat on this or any other issue. After all, patriots are few enough and disorganised enough to make only a little fuss, while former stalwart champions of the Right to Life of the unborn child are inexplicably silent, or have positively changed their minds. European money is too important to such persons not originally committed anyway. So, if the apparent conservative caucus within Fianna Fail and Fine Gael has disappeared, it is because it has been explained in terms understandable even to them that bigger things are at stake than life and death - Europe and, in particular, their personal place at the trough.

The only question with such men and women has always been where power lies, for therein also lies career advantage. For the foreseeable future, it goes without saying that power lies at least within the initiative of the Liberal agenda. In parenthesis, it may be noted that given the residual decency of the ordinary Irish person, the power of traditional ideas is not entirely evaporated and, as such, there will still be the occasional careerist to adopt temporarily certain issue-based positions designed to appeal to that residual force. Many, it must be said, are unreliable and even dark characters, turning up as spokesmen for some of our more populist ideas, in the hope of gaining our support to throw them up one more rung of the ladder, or in maintaining a latter day position when they have fallen out of favour with their masters. Essentially they are occasions for betrayal waiting to happen, and happen they regularly do.

Increasingly though, as the practical ability to effect and employ power within and without the State shifts to the Liberal agenda, the full consequences of having ignored the character issue in traditional politics will make itself felt. Opportunistic advantage now lies primarily with aligning one's career with "progressive" forces, and even the old models for lobbying the legislative process have become outmoded for our new circumstances.

This brings us back to the original problem again for those of us interested in directing the politics of the State in accordance Catholic, or even Christian principles, within the framework of the Catholic ethos as such. We have allowed the establishment of the party system without ideology. We were told to think it the more reasonable and "fair", and having allowed persons of no firm philosophy to assume the highest positions, we never once questioned their views as to their consistency. If indeed they were, as they quite often said, Catholic politicians, then surely we could have demanded of them more than a prohibition of contraception, abortion and divorce, which in the early days were seldom publicly espoused by even the most rabid liberal? It begs the question: *did we even know ourselves what it meant in matters of politics to be a Catholic?* Did we even have ourselves a frame of reference from which to view the direction of national policy, and the character of the men to whom we entrusted governance? If we did not have, we haven't any reason at all to be surprised when the secularist agenda grabbed the initiative on ground which Catholic advocates had long since left vacant?

It becomes all the more relevant today that we understand that it was first

and wholly on the battleground of *Ideas* that by apathy, lack of confidence, and cowardice, everything was lost. When Catholic Ireland accepted a flawed Constitution, which so briefly and meaninglessly acknowledged the majority faith, but essentially the equality of religions, it ceased to lay claim upon its rights; both metaphysical, in the authentic and accurate sense of representing the One True Church, and on a physical level, insofar as even the democratic principle, to which the Constitution was committed, would have given force to greater Catholic claims. From that time onwards, traditional values in Ireland, so wholly bound up with the Church, would necessarily be in more or less rapid retreat.

Though it is difficult to find much in the way of positive comment concerning the role of the institutional Church during the last seventy years, it must be added that the Second Vatican Council and, in particular, the document *Gaudium et Spes* was effectively the last straw. For in it the Church gives way so much, or least uses a form of words open to that interpretation, that as it played out in the world, it was essentially a surrender document in the face of both the un-Christian and occasionally openly anti-Christian forces. The Church of Christ might be swept away save that it "modernise" to fit in! One could hardly expect to build the City envisaged by St. Thomas Aquinas on that sand.

If Irish nationalism was to be Catholic, it had to be, and has to be, founded on the unremitting *Quas Primas*. For if this ever more cogent document - lines for our generation - is to be ignored, then as was and will continue to be pointed out, the Church should indeed mind its own business. For if the Catholic faith is not divinely and therefore singularly authorised as the Teacher of all truths, then any and all comments by it, or on behalf of it, in matters political have only a very limited value. If, however, as is the case, its infallible teaching is the word of divine revelation and from God Himself, then we ignore it at perils as yet unconceived in the human imagination. Catholics should think about this, political Catholics should never forget it! The Irish patriot has been, and will continue to be, repeatedly betrayed by an institutional Church which prefers to win pats on the head from its enemies than even to allude, however vaguely, to the reign of Christ the King. The idea is entirely foreign to the modern peddlers of the Social Gospel, which for semantics sounds better than what it is - Communism! Each eagerly awaited Bishops statement brings fresh disappointment, and the behaviour of many of the clergy, even as it is confined to the political arena, is so often beneath comment.

Catholics have come to believe in large part many of the myths about themselves nurtured by a hostile media, and having lost confidence in themselves fail to inspire anyone, except that basic and obvious truths concerning abortion, divorce, homosexuality, and some other matters still appeal to the common sense of many people. Organisationally though, they have ceased to matter. Even the beginnings of freeing the Cause from the shackles of the established party system show the first signs of decay within it. Again, they have begun without thinking. The corrosive effects of superficial pragmatism are evident in all the new parties being formed to "defend Christian values". Surely it is axiomatic that any party, movement, group or even an individual seeking to defend Christian values ought at least to know what they mean by Christian values. Yet ideological vagueness as an expedient, the notion

that the less one is seen to stand for and believe in, the broader the potential appeal has already taken root. Pragmatic, to be sure, in that the immediate organisational result in plain numbers is greater, superficial in that the hold upon those numbers is slight; and if in the medium to long term other stances are taken, divisions are inevitable, and under pressure the organisation thus created lacks cohesion.

Moreover, and more importantly, the attitude implies either a narrow view of the of the seriousness of our present situation, reducing it to a number of isolated phenomenon, or that failure in depth to understand that not to oppose is implicitly to support.

It seems to the patriot regarding abortion, for example, as the worst evil, logical to seek to rally opinion on that cause alone, thereby achieving a unity of sorts among persons of divergent principles on every other matter. By doing so, the argument has it, we meet the liberal on his weakest ground. Such thinking fails to take account of the myriad levels upon which the Liberal agenda advances, leaving the patriot on the strong ground only until such ground has been sufficiently softened up. It further fails to take account of the sources of Liberal power, and since it is essentially by the ability to effect and employ power, either physically or financially, that the fate of nations is decided the "conservative" has "clevered" himself into an ever decreasing circle. At the point where legislation for abortion reaches the political agenda, the pro-lifer finds himself unable to effect and employ power long since surrendered by default.

It is not truth which can, or will make us free. Truth can be swept away by force in various forms. Freedom is rather derived by strength, which can still in some part lie in the hands of individuals moved to activism. For activist individuals, strength is derived from action as such, applied always and everywhere against the sources, not the consequences, of Liberal power, partly institutional, but more importantly derived from seductive modernist ideas which activate. To be effective, it must be against all sources of such power.

This is not to say that single issue groups have never achieved anything, but they do so by exercising overwhelming influence within wider, and for the patriot in the present circumstances, hostile philosophical forums. This does no more than force tactical retreats. Recent Irish history reveals this most potently. Victories have been won - witness the 1983 pro-life Amendment, and the defeat of the first Divorce referendum. In retrospect, both cases were essentially reactive, the political parties support, primarily Fianna Fail, were entirely lost by inertia, and since the Liberals proceeded to advance on a hundred apparently unrelated levels, the tactical retreat was brief. Divorce is now law, and even if it had not been made so in 1995, it would have been by some method sooner rather than later. Abortion is imminent.

There is such a paucity of thinking on the part of the Catholics in Ireland, an obsession, increasingly unhealthy with areas of sexual morality alone, to the exclusion of all other forms of public and private morality upon which the former is necessarily contingent. A failure to understand the need to counter evil trends with a coherent counter philosophy that is all encompassing. All the more distressing when that counter philosophy of Catholic Social Teaching has never been more clearly enunciated and never more obviously relevant than today. The many encyclicals published by the

Popes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries give the clearest answers to modern dilemmas of social organisation, and the correct responses to the various secularist assaults, both Socialistic and Capitalistic, upon the foundations of Western culture and civilisation. The Catholic patriot above all has no need for intellectual embarrassment, if only he could bring himself to look beyond the myths propounded by the enemies of the Church, and his enemies too, to propose the practical application of 2,000 years of accumulated wisdom. Even for the secular patriot, they form a wealth of knowledge, ascertainably true in logic, only to date never applied.

We hardly even know our own Faith, merely some parts of it, which has sometimes been nobly defended, but always defended in isolation. If the Irish people had been aware, and insisted upon the application, of the teaching of the Church then many of the problems which loom so large in our national life today would not have come about at all. We would have known that when Establishment politicians paraded their virtues as pious, church-going, humble men that they were what they have always been and remain - sneaks, liars and cowards.

In proposing to formulate a strategy, with even the slightest hope of wresting back control of the Irish nation, one must not seek to put the cart before the horse. Ideology comes first, and organisation is the means to a clearly defined end. If the liberals are the Establishment of this and every other Western nation today that is not to say that they always were. It has not been by means of exerting Establishment power that they have solely or primarily advanced. Rather it was, and still is today, by force of ideas, albeit false ones, but no less attractive for that reason. They captured, firstly, all areas of learning and created through them a cadre of philosophers and propagandists for a worldview, which so thoroughly undermined the confidence of modern man in traditional notions and even basic common sense. Outward expressions of power flowed in the first instance from the capacity to implant false ideas and false thinking. It is a story four hundred years old at least and only reaching fruition in our time, but remember it was from ideas that everything else sprang. Efforts at suppression began with all the panoply of established strength, first with the monarchical system undermined and finally destroyed by an unbalanced and seductive push for the so-called Rights of Man. False conceptions of Economics placed production at the service of unbridled Capitalism, which only latterly wielded vast financial power. From its injustices grew, in reaction, the madness of Socialism. Objective Truth was dismissed by the democratic idea, that all things are subject to change and primarily a matter of perception, and then that the whim of the majority was stirred and manipulated by skilled propagandists. In our own day, this gives sanction to the slaughter of the unborn, "*prevailing concepts and ideas*" on a murderous rampage. We could go on indefinitely.

If patriots do not grasp that a politician cannot actually be for the European Union and pro-life without lying about one or the other, or at least being too thoroughly mixed up in his own head to be of any use, then we have learned nothing from the past few years, never mind history in general. We must return to the intellectual rigour of consistency and formulate ideas to combat the Liberal trend which is of a whole. We must tackle the essentials without regard to the immediate electoral possibilities, or other such phantasms which will ever be dangled in front of us as the

carrot to lead us away from what our opponents realise to be the really important things. It will take longer for such ideas to take root than some other possibilities, but in the end it is the only method by which to effect a worthwhile and lasting change to our circumstances. We must not allow ourselves to give way to what we imagine are the less awful aspects of modern life, the more immediately palatable, whence logic much of the worst aspects originate. If this appears to be a hopeless task, then it need only be remembered that when the forces of moral and cultural decay beheld the majesty of organised Christendom, it must have seemed to many of them an impossibility and the many setbacks suffered equally disheartening, but never once did their core cadre doubt or question their perceived rightness of cause, nor did they waver one scintilla from the dogmatic promulgation of their principles. Today, they are frightenly close to success. Our advantage lies in the clearness with which the consequences of their endeavours can be observed, maybe just before it is finally too late.

Firstly, however, it cannot be overstressed - let's have done with all illusions, historical and contemporary - that there never was in this country or in our parliament any genuine traditional caucus as such. It has not merely been lost to be so easily regained. Lobbying of hostile political organisations for crumbs of favour is no longer even practical, even if it were desirable. Catholic and traditional political action must be ***built***, not rebuilt, from the ground up. The preliminary foundation must be the correct and objective understanding of our current plight and how it came to be so. Then we must have a strategy of firm conviction and clear ideas, unburdened by any lingering myths placed there by the propaganda of our opponents. Maybe, *just maybe*, upon that we can at last build a Movement.



"A Primer On Economics."

In the early 1980's, it became common public discourse in Ireland to speak of the economy in terms of crisis, and clearly the state of the nation did give cause for serious concern. Ten years of EEC membership had not only failed to alleviate chronic levels of unemployment and emigration but had, though alas it was not admitted, seriously wounded any reasonable possibility of effecting a turnaround. With the world recession of the time, emigration, appalling as it was, became restricted as an option. Above all loomed the enormous national debt - at that time some £20 billion and rising. Crisis indeed may have been a mild word having full regard. There seemed, however, in the very recognition of the existence of a crisis, the possibility of at least some change, some reassessment of political and economic direction. Those naive enough to expect it were to be disappointed.

In the event the mid-Eighties saw the problem addressed superficially with swinging spending cuts by government, primarily in those areas which could least afford those cuts, and in those areas which were among the very few where the State could ever hope to fulfil a useful role. In the nature of them, it is impossible to estimate to what extent the affects of those cuts, especially in Health and Education, linger with us today. Political consensus grew around the need for this "courageous" policy of fiscal rectitude, however, and the Party System was consequently untouched in the main. Occasionally an individual T.D., here and there, paid a personal electoral price, but the party consensus ensured that no other policy was thinkable, much less a more radical reappraisal.

What is thoroughly strange is that all of the factors which contributed to talk of economic crisis at that time are still with us today, altered only in the degree whereby they are worse, yet no one speaks of fundamental crisis anymore. Not only that, but the idle chatter which passes for political discourse has moved on to speaking of "*Celtic Tigers*", and there are no laughs out loud when the comment is made either in the print or broadcast media, "*now when we are so rich*". The ephemeral nature of a recent boost in the so-called economic indicators appears to be anathema to such discussions. To a certain extent the ordinary member of the public may be forgiven. In the first instance, he has no knowledge of the questions at hand and no frame of reference to judge the validity of any statement on the economy. If he is told, and told unanimously, that things are going so very well, and if outwardly such appears to be the case, then there is no serious cause to rebuke him on the grounds that he has not looked deeper. To be sure the sheer novelty value of speaking about the economy in optimistic terms is intimidating for those who worry. However, true facts press themselves on thinking minds and worry we must, in particular as to just how many of those factors, which made the term "crisis" valid within the last decade, are still with us and to what extent they are worse.

The National Debt has continued to grow in the intervening period, the only progress a reduction as a percentage of a meaningless GNP rather than actually to decline, or even stabilise in real terms. Now, however, we hear of the achievement by

government of a miracle in overcoming deficits when, in fact, the truth is that while the problem began with deficit budgeting that has long since ceased to be the problem. The real debt continues to hang ominously over the nation, though no one any longer cares even to mention it as such. It has surpassed some £30 billion, but has dropped off the public agenda just as if it did not exist!

Unemployment hovers around at an incredibly high mark, fluctuating briefly down but sure to rise again, and though politicians pay lip service to the ideal of full employment and the tackling of this problem, it becomes increasingly obvious that they are content merely to stabilise the situation. The State's finances, it appears, can so far carry the welfare bill which averts the revolution otherwise inevitable, and so long as there is peace there is little thought for plenty. The long term effects on the national psyche, or indeed the consequences for the very many individuals and families involved, are, of course, incalculable in numerical terms. But to look into the root causes of unemployment would mean to investigate the whole foundation of the present economic structure and *that* no party is either willing or able to do.

Emigration to be sure has fallen off in recent times, but then precisely for the wrong reason that the traditional employment centres which were previously open are no longer. We have returning emigrants taking up jobs here, but no serious investigation has taken place into the extent to which these jobs are not really new, and to what extent they are merely the re-location of multi-national jobs to this country. To those who say that a job is a job, fair enough, but a job which re-located so very quickly *in* is a job which can re-locate equally quickly *out*. Neither has there been any serious investigation of the extent to which prolonged education has taken the place of emigration as a means of forestalling unemployment for young people increasingly competitive for the new jobs that are available. Nor has the question of quality been addressed at the lower end of the labour market, namely whether we are really talking about poorly paid employment to an unhealthy degree.

What is essential here is not whether a current boom exists or not, which in the strictest sense is undeniable, but whether that boom is solid and sustainable. Whether the economy is in fact on a seriously sound footing, or whether we are simply on a winning roll in the casino of the modern global economy; a roll which, defying the odds so far, cannot be expected to continue indefinitely. Upon examination, it seems that whatever peripheral changes the government has made concerning exchequer borrowings, public spending and labour relations, there has been no fundamental change in the manner in which the Irish economy has been run from the time that it was a complete failure through to the time when it has become such a heralded 'success'. That alone gives the sensible person cause for worry, since it suggests most strongly that whatever factors there are in the success lie almost entirely outside our hands. And so they do. That given, those factors can be altered unfavourably without our having the means to effect a resistance. There is a problem too with the poor level of economic analysis, and the magnitude of the boom, which is real, is grossly exaggerated by false accounting.

For nothing fundamental at all has changed in Ireland for the better, except that a new mood of optimism has swept the media, and discussions on the economy have taken on an almost surreal quality centring on economic indicators which, in

truth, have nothing whatever to do with the real productive health of the nation as such. But that they are "good", of that there seems no doubt. The Irish economy is growing faster than most, inflation is low and interest rates are, shall we say, less than they could be. There is a problem with this type of unreal analysis, (apart, that is, from the incredibly jargon ridden false complexity to which it gives rise), since there is so thin a relationship with such mundane things as productivity and employment, and since the nation's finances are calculated in percentages of percentages rather than real value, the whole endeavour has a fragile bubble-like quality. For a growing number of Irish people, the effect of good economic indicators in their daily lives is actually nil, and for many more the made up nature of the analytical methods employed simply serve to underline the fragility of their own grip on apparent prosperity.

The extent to which all of the indicators so prized are subject to manipulation was evidenced in the currency crisis which led to Britain's withdrawal, along with Italy, from the Exchange Rate Mechanism, as well as our own devaluation. But then that too may only be an indicator.

Let us take as a simple example: the government's achievement in balancing the current budget requirements. Aside from the wholly artificial nature of the National Debt as such, which we will return to later, there is the question of transfer pricing, which almost of itself forms explanation of Ireland's unreal economic growth. Transfer pricing is the method whereby International Corporations literally move their profits, at least on paper, to low tax areas, like Ireland, while not contributing in material terms to growth at all. A parent company, say, in Japan, can sell an almost finished product to a subsidiary in Ireland at a price so low that in fact the parent company makes no profit, or even indeed a loss. The Irish subsidiary receives the artificially low priced "raw material" which it completes to make the final product, for example, car assembly plants. In actuality, the Irish company has merely finished an almost finished product, but by doing so makes a vast profit in paper terms which it pays tax on in Ireland at the lower rate. Naturally, since any real growth in productivity has occurred for the most part in Japan, it is in Japan that the benefits in employment are felt, but since the paper profit in Ireland has increased as well, we have economic growth which hardly at all features in increased employment. The exchequer revenues also increase in Ireland through Corporation Tax, but then, since it was tax incentives which motivated the original transfer pricing, the benefit to Ireland here is minimal. What we have is an economic boom founded on artificial transfers, which do nothing to improve the State's finances, but which, crucially, gives us year on year the numerical impression of growth. Hence the very healthy economic growth so beloved of persons transfixed by the indicators.

The real balance of payments has not only not improved in recent years, but has in itself reached crisis proportions. While Ireland in monetary valuation has every year widened a favourable gap between exports and imports, the ephemeral nature of that gap is a cause for extreme concern. Of course, no such concern is evidenced.

Partly this has to do with the oldest story in the world, one of straightforward corruption. Many of the beneficiaries of the artificial system are also the major benefactors of the political parties, which created and maintain the current *status*

quo. It is not, however, as simple as that. The requirement of massive structural change in vast areas of Irish economic and political life are, in fact, beyond the present party system's capacity to contemplate. They are, in some senses, ideologically wedded to the *status quo* insofar as it is the situation that they inherited, and they are for the most part intellectually incapable of conceiving an alternative. Having grown up with the idea that radical changes in any area of national policy are the preserve of "extremists", - and extreme politics is in itself a bad thing - the preference on principle is to do **nothing**. They congregate on the so-called centre ground, determined to appear above all as moderates, which means that one always requires a precedent for any act which otherwise might have the effect of upsetting a delicate balance, which at least it is possible to live with. In any case, it is for them.

For the unemployed, the situation looks radically different. For them, the future, insofar as they can plan for it at all, is a bleak one. To be sure the welfare system is just about a survivable phenomenon. It is possible to make ends meet and as such they are kept from the revolutionary frame of mind, which otherwise would prevail. After all, they amount to a considerable number of the able bodied population and are a formidable electoral force, if not indeed a physical one, if they were so minded. Added to them are the large numbers of very low paid workers, who are very little better off than social welfare recipients. Many of them are in receipt of Family Income Supplement and so are not free of the need for welfare. Psychologically though, the exact necessary amounts are administered as a kind of anaesthetic, which keeps the worst from happening. So long as the system doles out just enough to make life bearable, other thoughts, like those of social and economic justice, do not enter their heads as other than idle discussion topics; and these are invariably focused by left wing propaganda in the wrong direction. On the whole, they have to contend with the more immediate difficulties of survival on a low income.

Moreover, the political class has proven itself very adept at fostering division so that the unemployed feel more than a little responsible for their own predicament. A man who thinks that it is his own fault is hardly likely to give any government official much hassle. The employed, who so often appear to have no idea how precarious their own grasp on employment is, are subtly turned against those who are not. The idea that excessive income tax is the result of the social welfare bill is so common that useful connections between classes for national purposes is now very near impossible. Never mind that over 70% of the income tax collected goes to pay just the interest on the National Debt to international bankers, who are, of course, very respectable people not at all like the "*waster on the dole*". The idea is so ingrained that the division reaches almost venomous proportions, although entirely baseless. The consequences of this lack of national cohesion are incalculable, and must be measured in more than just pounds and pence.

The situation is now so serious that in parts of Dublin, Cork and Limerick an underclass has grown up with little or no sense of belonging to the same nation as everyone else. Deplorably, the idea of wishing that they did not has grown as well. For practical purposes, all law and order has broken down whereby it has become, not only pointless, but impossibly dangerous, for Gardai to enter certain parts at night and, even in some cases, in broad

daylight. It is a problem that can only grow worse, both in terms of numbers and severity, accompanied as it is by a drugs culture and a universal feeling of despair.

All these things occur far away from where the political establishment lives, works and plays. The despairing do not turn out to vote as a general rule and, in consequence, they cease to count politically in any meaningful measure. Yet someone ought to take note that in a country founded on an elected legislature between 30% and 40% do not care enough to bother voting. In the short term, it is, of course, easy to ignore, but it is hardly sustainable.

Among the employed the situation is not in any real sense better, though in day to day living standards, it may appear to be. Successive governments failure to manage the affairs entrusted to them place an increasingly impossible burden upon the ordinary working family, which it will take very much more than tinkering with 1% or 2% of income tax to remedy. Rates of personal taxation in this country are so high as to no longer amount to a political issue so much as a moral one. Simply exclaiming that it may be worse elsewhere is hardly the point. How is it tenable that in a country not officially socialist, the State draws to itself such an enormous chunk of the Gross National Product? And no, it is not even for the redistribution of wealth to the less well off, which might arguably be well intended. More often it finds its way into the hands of multi-national corporations in the form of grants and tax breaks paid for by PAYE, or in interest payments to international bankers on previous loans, or simply wasted on grandiose projects of little social benefit and no economic advantage. With so much of the money available in Ireland redirected by the State, the day to day power granted to the functionaries of the public service is appalling when one considers that we believe ourselves to live in a free country.

Naturally, the State wields that power with the same reckless disregard for cause and effect that it works elsewhere. On every level of the social and economic life of the nation, there is some functionary to be found fulfilling some entirely useless, if not actually damaging, role. Every action, by every citizen, every day is subject to a bureaucracy of suffocating proportions. For every action, a form to be filled out at best in duplicate. For every status in life, a department responsible, a vast monolith of waste and inefficiency. Yet worse, a veritable dictatorship of paper imposed with more rigour than any historical precedent, and done with the progressive ease that, insofar as people notice, they more saliently accept. How many of our average daily decisions have their origin in genuine free will, and how many in order to qualify for some State sponsored advantage, or to avoid some State determined penalty?

This intervention in the economy at every level, and almost always to crippling effect, is monstrous, and no less so because we have come to take it for granted. No one wonders why the government owns an airline, or an electricity company, or a bus and rail company, or any of the other utilities. Up until recently they owned hotels! They just do and that seems to be explanation enough. But for a society which imagines itself basically free, though almost no ordinary individual owns any property of their own, it ought to be a pressing issue. Why does the State own so much, and multi-national business the rest? Is it healthy for any nation to have such a preponderance of Big Government, on the one hand, and Big Business on the other?

Having once introduced some idea of the artificiality of economics, as it is

currently practised in this country, perhaps we ought to look at the whole nature of the question in its broad strokes, beginning with some basic facts.

Economics as a word for the subject of study is relatively new. Until quite recently, whenever the topic was studied, discussed, analysed or otherwise addressed, it was known as Political Economy. This drew the student's attention to the relationship between the economics of the nation and the politics under whose environment the economy as such prospered or otherwise; and the manner in which that prosperity or otherwise inevitably affected the politics. Even at the height of *laissez-faire* Capitalism, prominent in the earliest stages of the Industrial Revolution, it would have been unthinkable to imagine that the link was not all encompassing and indeed vital. After all, the material welfare of the nations are the foundation of their existence and not much can be carried on in the absence of material basics. In more sensible times, it was readily understood that economics had to do with material basics, and was not ringed with the mind-numbing jargon more commonly associated with discussions on the subject in recent times.

It follows that it can hardly be worthwhile to consider political questions of the modern age in isolation from that which they *cannot* be isolated. To attempt to do so is to proceed, however logically, from a flawed premise and heap error upon error. Many people do not, however, understand this and proceed to consider matters, particularly in the social sphere, from a traditional or liberal standpoint without regard to the economic factors which underpin the various social developments. Above all, they fail to understand that, obviously, the people wielding the greatest economic power are inevitably wielding the political power, and to do so in such a fashion as to shape the social landscape in anyway that they choose. Naturally, they always allow for the occasional, but in practise rare, event provoked by human obtuseness. This is another way of saying money makes the world go round, at least in matters of men and nations.

Economics, above all subjects affecting the political agenda, is so poorly understood and worse, so poorly studied, that the average person's grasp of the thing is almost infantile. It is not, contrary to popular belief, the enormously complex matter that we might suppose on hearing the jargon which surrounds the usual discussions. Since the issues basically relate to the creation, accumulation and distribution of wealth, they hardly need be beyond the ordinary individual's ability, at least with regard to that amount of knowledge which would lead him to question the manner in which any economic debate is carried on. If you can create confusion surrounding the very nature of wealth, you can in fact perform a kind of fair ground three card trick on a monumental scale, and we begin to get some idea of why it might be done.

The mind of the public is muddled with economic indicators, which in practice mean hardly anything at all, calculated in the false coinage of a corrupt money system in which the values are arbitrary and manipulated. The vast majority of people, confused by the whole matter, prefer not to think about it, and carry on with their lives only dimly aware that something might not be right somewhere, but leaving it to others to work out the details. The only problem is that, in reality, the details impinge very much more on their lives, in the very practical sense, than can forever sustain

their ignorance, and facts, being stubborn things, invariably bite home in everyday existence. When the mortgage payments have to be made, there is a reason why they are wildly out of proportion with the sum originally borrowed. When you are unemployed at a time of perceived massive growth, there is a reason. When taxation amounts to an ever increasing, and seemingly insatiable, burden, but the State provides less and less of the services it claims that the tax is for, there is a reason. There is a reason too why wealth becomes daily more concentrated in the hands of a tiny portion of people, while the vast majority, though working harder and longer, in fact own nothing and seem never able to get ahead of an oncoming bill.

The reason is money, or rather false money. We have replaced the concept of real capital with money, a token value of exchange, and we have developed on a global scale, the economic model known as Capitalism, founded on the primacy of this entirely artificial factor of production. This is not to be confused with private productive enterprise for one moment, despite the propaganda on its behalf, which would like to suggest that every attack on Capitalism is an attack on private ownership of property, and the private enjoyment of the fruits of one's own labours. If only it were, then much of the problems of modern times would not be with us. On the contrary, Capitalism has nothing whatever to do with private property as such, and indeed it was a form of extreme Monopoly Capitalism which we find practised in the former Soviet Union. Capitalism, as its name in common usage suggests, is based on the primacy of capital, defined as token money above all other factors of production. When one considers that money is not, properly speaking, such a factor one gets some inkling of just how deleterious an economic model it can be.

It does not require money to make a product at all, insofar as it is raw materials with labour, and the management of labour, which creates the thing itself. Money, on the other hand, is merely the token value attributed to the other factors. It would seem then that the stable value of money as a purchaser of the necessary raw materials, hirer of labour and profiteer of management is vital to sound economics. But in the system, which regards money as a thing in itself, it ceases to be a token value of exchange, and becomes instead a commodity in its own right to be traded at various values, more often than not having little to do with what the ordinary person would recognise as real. The consequences are universally detrimental. Money becomes the master of production instead of the other way around, and within that conception the individual becomes a slave to production. Money, which has lost its worth, becomes a purely fictional concept.

If money isn't what people imagine it to be, what is it? For the answer, we must return to its origins. In the beginning money served the function solely as the medium of exchange, a nominal value to be placed on real items so that, as societies of men grew complex, the burdensome barter system might be replaced by the exchange of the token, money. In this way, it could be given for an item and later exchanged again by the receiver for another item. It depended, of course, upon the recognition that the token had some value accepted in common usage and in law. It was then a store of wealth, a measure of such things as food, clothing and other commodities

which first make life possible, and then comfortable. As such, it is indispensable to civilisation on any appreciable scale and functions quite well. In earlier times, precious metals, precious by virtue of scarcity, served as the coinage of money and here, so to speak, the seeds of the difficulty, without being at first apparent, were sown.

Metal coinage of any significant amount is quite burdensome and its possession easily open to theft, especially in transit. It seemed sensible, then, to have it stored where it might be protected. This was to be the origin of the goldsmiths and silversmiths, who held quantities of the metals for safekeeping, and provided their owners with promissory notes by which the gold or silver might be withdrawn when it was required. It further seemed sensible, since these notes represented deposits, that instead of physically withdrawing the amount required the note itself could be exchanged which, thereafter, became paper money for practical purposes.

The process resulted in such gold or silver smiths - though not the owners - being in physical possession of large quantities of valuable metals, and it occurred to them that, if they were to lend them to others at interest, that is usury, they could profit a lot more than as mere storers for a fee. Moreover, once the practice of exchanging the promissory notes had become widespread, they found that in practice such notes were rarely actually presented by persons demanding the gold or silver. They could presume, and they did, that only say 10% of such notes would ever be presented at any one time for redemption. Why not, then, issue more promissory notes than they had precious metals in store. By such means, they could loan at interest money which was not only not theirs, but that in fact *did not even exist*. The interest extracted, in value, of goods or services would be very real. By such means, they could become very rich without, it must be noted, having either earned any of it, nor taken any risks to acquire it.

That the governments at the time permitted these private bankers, as they would become known, to print their own money effectively was reprehensible enough, when at least it might have been excused as not having the hindsight knowledge of its inevitable consequences. No such excuse exists today. For, although the practice has become cloaked in the verbiage of High Finance, it remains essentially the same. Money, which originated as the fixed value token of exchange, has become a thing in itself with almost no relationship to the physical materials it originally represented, except insofar as those things are still acquirable by the exchange of money, which it is now at the behest of private individuals to create. With the advent of fiat currency, the printing of money lost even its tenuous links with the reality of gold, and no longer relates to anything except itself, money. Nor even are we talking about the note currency, but account entries, which at this stage are computerised digits. As if to add insult to injury, in a great many instances, the unlimited 'legal' right to this private control of money issue was granted by governments in return for loans paid by the bankers in the same worthless fashion. If it appears somewhat Alice in Wonderlandish, it is only because it is.

The currency of all nations has long since ceased to have any real value, but exists now merely as an idea, though a very powerful one. The actual economic life of nations moves at the behest of this fiction, and the production of goods and the

rendering of services, in opposition to common sense, has become subject to the availability of tokens in the form, primarily, of credit.

Few enough people realise this and thus continue to believe in the value of money as a medium of exchange in its proper sense. Their secular faith is essential to the smooth working of the fraud. Private interests having usurped the right to create any amount of money, and by virtue of that right are usurping possession of every material thing in the world while the faith lives. Governments of every political shade defend that right by the force.

As we have noted, the economic model founded on the primacy of capital - Capitalism - thus defined as the determining factor of production, is of itself flawed. If we further discover that the nature of that capital, which is to say money, is in fact fraudulently created, it follows that the whole basis of the nation's economic life is founded upon a fraud. The means of production and, consequently, the livelihoods of every person lies within the sphere of legally protected thieves of an incalculably vast fortune. Every borrowed penny in the world, created out of nothing, demands a tribute by usury of some part of the work and product of every individual. Through interest payments on artificial national debts, the States of the world pay enormous, annual tribute too to private bankers. Since they frame policy largely with regard to maintaining their credit rating and financing for the tribute, then in those hands too lies the political control of every nation. Ireland's entry into the European Economic Community was due in no small way to the need to maintain just such a sound credit rating, and a pattern of decision making, with reference to aspirations other than national ones, is apparent.

By creating new money the banks can effectively devalue all other currency in circulation, which is to say all that is in pockets, and produce inflation thereby wiping value off the store of wealth in any person's possession. In extreme cases, such inflation can wipe out all value. By such means, life savings can become worthless overnight, regardless of the many years work and sacrifice which the nominal money store represents. By withdrawing money from circulation, they can cause deflation wiping value off physical assets, apparently so much more secure. Banks may raise interest rates at will, citing a shortage of the money they create, making borrowing and, consequently, investment anywhere from more difficult to impossible; or lower them, allowing for rapid increases in sometimes foolish investment. Of course, it goes without saying that by their control of credit, they may boost or cripple the various sectors in a given economy.

This is what economists mean by the "*price of money*". How could it have a price as such, if it were only an exchange medium? The same way that countries with good harvests can suffer depressions in agriculture or productive companies can suddenly close. It is by virtue of production having become the servant of fraudulent credit which, at the whim of private interests, may be granted or withdrawn. ***That is the reality of Capitalism.***

It makes no sense to answer that such extreme instances are rare, and that the banks work in a manner not nearly so capricious. For even though that is generally true, and such questions referred to as credit policy move under market considerations,

it is indictment enough that it is *possible*. It is more than sufficient that moderate examples are everywhere in evidence in the economic cycles, otherwise so mysterious, by which economies go through periods of rapid growth or “boom” alternating with recession and sometimes depression. That this cyclical theory has no basis in changes in the physical resources of the nation is only an apparent puzzle, as is the misery that it can give rise to in the lives of ordinary families. It is worth noting that you will almost never hear a spokesman of the Left mention it in his critique of the iniquities of Capitalism, by which he most certainly means private enterprise and the ownership of private property.

Capitalism, a word invented by Karl Marx, has nothing whatever to do with private enterprise, but more often works to contrary effect for contrary purposes. It is in no sense either the opposite or alternative to Communism. Both share the limited materialist conception of the world and of the true purpose of man, and it has been said justly that what Communism enslaves to the State bureaucracy, Capitalism enslaves to the private. In any case, both systems ensure the vast concentration of wealth and the means of production, which is true power, in the hands of a small number of malevolent individuals, either by control or ownership. The Capitalist and the Communist differ not at all on the essential acceptance of the myths of modern materialism, especially on the nature of money.

What makes this monstrous fraud so fruitful is, of course, its indispensable consort, usury. Usury, by which we mean the taking of interest on *unproductive* loans, no matter how large or small, is at the heart of why the previous fraud works. In practice, banks actually function by the charging of such interest, and clear the created credit money on the repayment of the interest burdened loan. In this way, they draw unto themselves money, which is real wealth when you consider how much work and effort the borrower must exchange in order to find the means of repayment. What is the difference, therefore, between productive and unproductive loans, and why is it important?

A productive loan is where money is given for an investment, the intention of which is to create new wealth - for example, the development of a coalmine. In this instance, there is wealth created through the loan, and the interest on the loan amounts only to a share, however large, on the increase in wealth. One may argue about the amount of interest which might be fair, but that is a matter for the parties to the loan. It is not a moral question as such. Nor indeed is it an economically destructive question, since the interest thus charged draws to the lender only some part of the increase of overall wealth in the world. Interest on an unproductive loan, however, must lead to a very dangerous concentration. For example, if a loan is used to build a house to accommodate the borrower and his family, then there is no increase in the overall wealth. What happens when interest is charged is that the lender draws on some part of the borrower's future wealth, and in doing so takes from nothing that was created, but from what already exists. In the situation where a large part of loan credit is formed of such unproductive nature, the existing wealth would eventually be drawn into the hands of a few lenders. This is precisely what is happening today. The vast majority of personal loan capital is formed of house mortgages and, as such, is strictly

speaking unproductive, although it is drawing interest from the productive economy to the lenders. *This is the essence of Usury.*

The great Catholic writer, Hilaire Belloc, illustrates the arguments against usury succinctly in his pamphlet of the same name. Carried to its logical conclusion, it would lead inevitably to the ownership of the whole world by one individual, but that unlikely result aside, it has certainly in practice led to an enormous and unhealthy concentration. Remember that the loan capital itself was created artificially by the lenders, who in fact gave nothing at all, and the mind reels from the monstrosity.

Up until now, the most significant factor cloaking the corrupt expropriation has been the incredible technological advances of the last two centuries, which accompanied and caused the Industrial Revolution. In themselves, they have brought enormous gains in prosperity, at least where the revolution was most felt, in the Western World. As such, it was not so noticeable that the economic system within which the progress was made was essentially flawed, nor that while living standards were rising for all classes, the trend in the ownership and control of wealth, as well as the means of acquiring future wealth, was exclusively in one negative direction. The average person noted only that his or her own personal circumstance was so much better. He or she did not wonder at the extent to which private property owners were diminishing, did not conclude from the flight from the land that the livelihood of families, being dependent on an uncertain wage, was a fragile prosperity. It did not dawn on such folk that the political consequences of this trend would be to place power in the hands of a few, given that power *always* follows wealth.

It was clear that while wages increased living standards all was well and, if the State might be taking an ever increasing share, it was but annoying when set against the palpable fact of a very satisfactory all round improvement.

That part of the illusion inevitably becomes more difficult to sustain with the current direction of technological advances. As it progress further, it means that labour is replaced by mechanical or computerised devices, and the question of full employment, long since abandoned as a serious goal, gives way to an era of almost total unemployment. The harsh truth comes biting home. It is of little consequence to the unemployed whether or not wages are rising in real terms. It will matter far more that successive governments have allowed the development of a social structure which has left 30% of the wealth in the hands of just 1% of the people, and a full 60% in the hands of just 5%. The nebulous nature of wage earning will be all too clear when there are none to collect.

We cannot escape the impact of the global economy, which is far more tangible than most commentators think. It is not simply a matter of competing with low wage, Third World nations, for markets, which were for some considerable time the market for products from the West, soaking up the excess from a saturated Europe and North America. Not only will they be competition here, but it goes without saying that they will feed into, and consume, that overseas market upon which the developed economies are dependent. Modern capitalist methodology in the productive sphere has never actually dropped the mercantilist dogmas as such. It has merely shifted the focus from colonies, which are subordinated politically and militarily, to economic

satellites founded on corrupt governments, which must give way. With the rise of investment and development in what we now call the Third World, Western technology will bury the home market in cheap, but equally well produced, goods made in countries which were formerly dump markets for O.E.C.D. excess. For the multi-national corporation knows no national loyalty by nature, and even the least skilled workforce can operate the most sophisticated plant.

While the massive advances in all the areas of science had a generally positive influence on employment and prosperity in the past, we have now moved well beyond that. Since employees are always more troublesome than machines, the owning class - which given the debt burden founded on false money is also the banker class - has pushed exclusively for labour saving progress. The Irish government, despite proclaiming heartfelt concern at the rising levels of idleness, could serve as a model. With 100% Capital Tax Allowances on machinery and other labour saving industrial equipment, they have year on year weighed heavier burdens on the PAYE sector and added insult to injury with the incredible idea of P.R.S.I. contributions. An ever rising burden on wage taxes in an environment of high unemployment, and virtually free machinery, gave the labour reduced sectors of the economy an enormous advantage and, in consequence, they and unemployment, have grown. A question: *if this was not deliberate, what was it?*

Within the inherently unstable Capitalist system, a certain number of unemployed act as a natural economic weight against inflation without hampering the profit expansion of the banking cartels. As a result, we hear economists speak evermore frequently of an "acceptable" rate of unemployment. The European Union, as a highly regulated entity, is particularly notorious as a trading bloc, where growth, and the fruits of growth, in the lives of the ordinary citizen are completely, or nearly completely, separated.

A lengthening dole queue has its political corollary in chastening those still in employment. They know how replaceable they are, especially the low paid and underskilled. They are always aware of just how hard they would find it to get another job. The knock on effect in collective bargaining, as well as in the worst form of "conservative" politics, is not measurable, but clearly present. Just how much unemployment is used as an instrument of social control we can only wonder at, but those of us who are politically active know the levels of paranoia that many, who agree with us in their hearts, have concerning any potential risks to their job.

Another issue arises here too. Though emigration, by virtue of the other countries facing similar problems with similar causes, has lessened considerably in terms of simple *numbers*, the situation has, if anything, worsened insofar as *type*. For it is increasingly the better educated and initiative takers who are to be found opting for emigration. They find fitting into the job markets of other countries easier and find them generally more rewarding, given that the skills they bring with them are in the technological cutting edge sectors. This is in itself a multiplication of Ireland's woes, since the so-called brain drain cuts the leadership head off the Irish economy, leaving behind the mass of unskilled, and further lessening the numbers actually at work. With that comes the obvious reduction in revenues from taxation to the exchequer, but even more the incalculable cost of lost initiative which alone might lend hope of giving impetus

to a flagging system. For the Establishment, however, it is a welcome relief since from their vantage point, they see a drain of dissatisfaction, which given the nature of the people involved, *might* also give leadership to real dissent in the longer term.

All of which is compounded by Ireland's current, and expected relationship, with the European Union. Without getting into a discussion of the relative merits of E.U. subsidies, as opposed to the damage the single market has wrought in other ways, it suffices to say that for what they were worth, they are not likely to be forthcoming in the future. Designed, or so we were told, to promote convergence between the member states, they have succeeded by the erroneous accounting method in drawing Ireland's G.N.P. up to some 90% of the E.U. average. As that position apparently improves, and given the expected entry of former Communist states, Ireland's claim on significant transfers, already in doubt, will evaporate. Having regard to the distribution, we must take for granted that they will cease without having measurably affected the circumstances of the ordinary wage earner, and certainly not those on the lower end of the social scale. It is, you can be sure, they who will have to bear the burden of the changed circumstances, because Ireland is too rich as a whole, however narrowly held this wealth is. Bearing in mind that the exchequer is already perilously strung out on debt, the consequences of no more European intervention will have to be seen to be believed.

Irish agriculture as a direct consequence of the lunatic application of the Common Agricultural Policy, where almost 80% of the aid went to just 20% of the mostly larger farmers, is approaching a crisis in any case. With the final withdrawal of supports, we can be guaranteed a crisis degenerating into a wholesale collapse. For, in spite of all that has been written and said concerning EEC money for Irish farming, little attention has been given to the side effects - principally, that with intervention for commodity farming products, Irish agriculture developed in a fashion unsuited for the impending free market, which must have been planned all along. The tertiary industries of food processing and the development of "value added" products was suffocated at its nascent stage, and commodity products, useless to the wider world market, were encouraged by incentive to dominate at the very time when such tertiary parallel growth was vital to a truly viable rural life. We can see the rapid departure from the land with its attendant depopulation of vast areas gaining pace, and it cannot but get worse.

Indigenous industry itself will find its problems multiplied by a completely protection-free environment being formed, and no one can explain, excepting the occasionally confident ramblings of ministers, how it is that home industry will compete. New companies will be unable in their formative stage to build on the security of the home market even taking that as the whole of the E.U., and will be smothered early by economies of scale; not to mention the additional difficulties associated with being a peripheral island. Tourism, we will find, just won't cut the cloth to fit. To all that, the government proposes to add what can only be described as the menace of monetary union.

Ireland has, heretofore, experienced monetary union with Britain, and as a consequence, no country has more good reason for alarm than ourselves. Leaving

aside altogether the internationalist tendency of the modern monetary system described above, the reality of the Single Currency will be to draw resources to well established central points of economic activity, viz: the continental regions of Northern France, the Benelux countries and Western Germany, with perhaps some hope of competition for Northern Italy and Austria. Although we are well accustomed to bemoaning the effects of British colonial involvement in our country, it is worth noting that in that instance the union was fiscal as well as monetary. That is to say, it was accompanied by considerably greater financial transfers from the United Kingdom, administered as a single exchequer. Arguably other negative features of the union had their dismal effect on Ireland, but such deleterious features will be hereafter present also, though crucially *without* continental transfers. The European Union has just 1% of its members GNP available to it and no increase is envisaged. Without this aid, the powerful centripetal forces will strip peripheral regions, like Ireland, of resources and people causing these to mass at the core.

To forego the remaining meagre controls over monetary policy available to an Irish government is to cede the last shreds of autonomy to other interests. It is an invitation to an economy, sufficiently structurally weak, to collapse.

The party politicals, however, have no other idea what to do. Having renounced ideology as a debatable question in the public arena is not at all to remove its force. One way or another, ideological interests, which are no more than the premise and frame of reference for any rational thought process, will make themselves felt. If they have not done so in the open, you can be absolutely sure they have done so secretly. The ideological force which has moved this country has been Liberal Capitalism exercising the power of capital within and without Dail Eireann. It could not for long have been the adopted policy in the economic sphere without making itself felt in the social and political spheres too. It has been by the manipulation of vast quantities of money that its captains have been able to impose a *fait accompli*, whereby no Irish government has been able to conceive an alternative course of action in any sphere, save the one laid out for them.

Everything then, you can be sure, well serves the purposes of the manipulators. Monetary Union fits their plans. The emerging European Superstate is only one step on a journey towards unrestrained free market Capitalism. The social philosophy required to meld that new state has equally begun falling into place, as perforce it must. That it might not be in any one country's interests is of no consideration, since they are all at once "*citizens of the world*" and owe allegiance to no nation.

It is quite logical that they should be so, for in fact they cannot register a conception of the nation as anything more than the State, and their idea of the State is so very poorly materialist that it cannot, of course, stand against materialistic progress which their ideology represents; at least for themselves personally, which is for them the whole question and, wielding the power that they do, it has appeared to become the whole question for us all. So that in macro-economic terms, we may say that the basis of the problem lies with that false conception of the State as such.

They conceive the State as a functionary device. It exists to provide the framework within which money can be acquired, and the theft of it, at least in the

smash and grab sense of the word, can as much as possible be prevented. Even to the extent to which the State has intervened the same process is at work, with the exchequer funding from the taxpayers the infrastructure which only Capitalism requires, but which Capitalism is unwilling to pay for. Hence the roads and railways, as well as in Ireland electricity provision, and other functions have devolved to the State. Not for the people, or only incidentally, but for Capital. All other State functions have become ever more subsidiary to that primary aim, to such a degree that it now seems unable to fulfil any other role, hemmed in as it is by forces, domestic and foreign, far more powerful within a structure of its own creation. It is an impoverished notion of the State, and renders inevitable the altogether financially more efficient World State. Its concomitant view of humanity as a mere participle of the economy, more or less valuable in its productive capacity, has occasionally and will be again frightening in its application.

The hope of humanity lies in a superior sense of the human person filling his or her ordained role within society, in accordance with the Divine Plan for Order. In that conception, the State is the crucible and patrimony of the Nation, constituted of one people, itself constituted of the sum of its families. The role of the State is to provide, holistically speaking, for the well-being of those families, and in the economic sphere for their material well being. One will grasp immediately that what is involved here is not a jingoist 'nationalism', but something, nonetheless, that is integrally patriotic and self-seeking within the bounds of decency and respect for other Nations and Peoples. One understands too that the role in providing for the genuine well-being of the people does not confer upon the State the unlimited right of interference in civil liberties that have become so commonplace. Rather it is with a mindset granting a well ordered adherence to the principles of Justice and Freedom. In using terms so frequently abused, it is as well to remark that by Justice and Freedom we mean not punchlines for disordered and universally corrupt socialistic or communistic impositions. Nor, however, do we mean to prostitute the noble ideals of private ownership and private enterprise to the destructive materialist avarice of the modern world. No, we mean something entirely different, founded on Tradition and, above all, on the unchanging truths of the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church.

Justice, in material terms, means the provision by work of the necessities to enable families to be founded and live in material comfort appropriate to the dignity of the Christian man. By Freedom, we mean the right, under God, to possess and bequeath property privately owned, and within the nation widely diffused. This does not mean *equally* diffused for such is neither possible nor desirable, given the natural inequalities of condition and circumstance to be found in any society. It does mean, however, that it should be widely enough diffused that real power, which is economic power, may lie with the broad width and breath of the people as such.

Thereby simply and without circumlocution is expressed the fundamentals of the Catholic doctrine in regard to Economics. We must give priority, therefore, to thought within the range of what is *essential*, and then to what is *possible*. If by the principle we establish that the nation does not exist to serve either an economic system in the abstract, or Capitalism in practice, but contrariwise that capital exists for the

benefit of the economy in the service of the nation, then it follows that the current regime must be cleared away and the clearing must be of root and branch radicalism. In doing so, there is the requirement to have consistent regard to where we are now in relation to where we wish to be. As such any serious beginning must undertake a return to sound money.

Sound money is of constant, reliable value in the context of stable prices, conceivable only in terms of an exchange medium whose volume is related only to the total goods and services available to the nation, and not created by private interest manipulating a fluctuating supply of credit finance. With that as a given, it becomes unthinkable that any private power to create money should be permitted to exist. *That right lies solely with the State, in the issue of non-interest bearing currency of a volume determined by the true wealth of the nation, which it then properly represents.* Increases in volume ought to have regard to correlated increases in true wealth, while decreases or withdrawals of currency ought to be made only by taxation, and then only with regard to actual contractions of actual wealth.

It will be apparent that such a currency will not be a tradeable commodity in itself, having been returned to its original representative value, and having then no other. The purchase of Irish punts by speculators would be unthinkable, since its value is unchanging and gives no motive for speculation. In any case, it would not be wise in such a situation to have the currency available on exchange markets, which could lead to a crisis of extraordinary proportions. Rather the State Central Bank would act as a clearing house for foreign currency exchange for the purposes of international trade, and that money could not be withdrawn from circulation by either devious or accidental means.

It will also be apparent that, since the issue of new currency is in line with increases in production, or in discovery as in mining for example, the modern dilemma of inflation will disappear with the application of a sound monetary policy. Taken as a whole, general price increases are impossible, since the currency level will fluctuate equally with fluctuations in real wealth. Or put more simply, what the pound will buy today, it will buy in ten or even a hundred years. Occasional mild price fluctuations will be the result of real changes in supply and demand, and in the trading market will quickly balance themselves out with concomitant production.

Productive capacity, moreover, will return to the principle of sound productive investment, with reliable wealth creating potential rather than being dependent on speculative credit finance. In this context, the massive problem of unemployment will in fact be self solving to a large degree. The demand for labour will depend on the possibilities of wealth creation through production, and thence the labour requirements for production. Unhindered by considerations of the capricious availability of credit, such possibilities will never cease to exist. It is a monstrosity, exclusive to the Capitalist structure, that the potential for wealth creation, which the unemployed represent, is left idle so long. How many times have we heard the comment, in relation to the dole queues, that it's not as if there is no work that needs to be done? But where production is subject to the wholly arbitrary availability of loans, then ever longer queues are the inevitable and even "logical" result. Whereas

the cost of capital versus the cost of labour has been instrumental in creating the problem, a reversal of criteria will absorb the currently idle into productive enterprise that creates a capital of real worth.

Government and State function in the material welfare of the nation must retrace its steps to the primary purpose of facilitating the prosperity of the people and not mere economic growth. The false establishment of money has done more than any socialist expropriation to assault the principle of private property, since with the power wielded by banks, it has succeeded in rendering it impossible to hold any property of fixed value for any length of time. It followed that, since employment for the mass of the people had nothing essentially in common with their motives, the private market under their corrupt direction could not see that as a priority either. Until such time as the State reassumes its natural right as the sole issuer of the currency of the State, any pious pronouncements concerning the goal of full employment are hollow and meaningless.

The deleterious effects have hardly halted there. The whole incentive to save and plan for the future has been robbed by inflation from the employed also, since the value of any savings are again subject to the controllers of money issue. A stable value promotes, in the first instance, the desire to save and plan, which of itself tends to facilitate the wider diffusion of private property. The middle and upper working classes will find themselves in a position to establish small businesses, a human desire more common than currently imagined within an environment which generally suggests that it is an unthinkable gamble. We may foresee the renewal of productive activity on the smaller scale, providing for livelihoods on a community level, and solidly rooted in an expanding domestic market rather than always heaving toward yonder possibilities in the macro-terms so favoured by recent administrations, and rarely materialising in fact. Jobs thus created are less likely to be of the "*here today gone tomorrow*" variety, at the service of foreign objectives.

It would, of course, be worse than useless to tackle the question of monetary reform without firm action against the practice of usury, now so common and seen as essential within the Capitalist frame of reference. Otherwise the tendency for wealth to deplete itself will remain. Usury, which we have noted, is not the charging of excessive interest, but the charging of interest on *unproductive* loans. In practice, its effect is to draw investment away from productive enterprise into the much more profitable and risk free compounding of wealth in the hands of the lender. On unproductive loans, the result is that the whole wealth of the nation gravitates to the very few, who have done nothing to earn it. It has been the ruination even of empires, and it is consequently not reasonable to assume that we can defy the application of mathematical certainties.

Only loans, which are granted for the production of wealth, can bear the burden of interest payments, in which case the burden can be of any degree so long as it is commensurate with the realised potential of the idea for which the capital is being raised. It would be possible to oblige the repayment of the original sum borrowed, regardless of the success or failure of the enterprise, since this is not itself a waster of wealth. However, the current lending of money at interest, irrespective of its purpose, has the implication of destroying the economy in the longer term.

This issue raises some problems of reconstruction, naturally, which should not be shied away from. They are, in any case, not nearly so difficult as one might immediately imagine. There is in fact no problem at all with credit for enterprise development, since it is productive, and it is upon the lie that it cannot be raised that the myth of necessity has grown up around usury. One of the major areas of necessary change is that of credit for such things as house mortgages and so forth. These are non-productive loans in the strict sense, and the charging of interest is abhorrent. Just how much so is apparent in the misery caused to many families by the extreme effort of repaying loans in sums many times in excess of the original amount borrowed. The issue of house mortgages is grounds enough to justify being rid of usury. Its effects are manifold: poverty among families with otherwise reasonable incomes; the two wage family being necessary just to make ends meet, with its disastrous impact on the traditional family; the limitation of family size, because the need to meet mortgage payments comes before having children. We will return to these points in more detail in a future chapter, but here we are primarily concerned with what to do.

The answer is in fact quite simple and not at all novel, though attempts in the past have finally been frustrated by the absence of the firm support of law. The original Credit Union Movement was founded by a Catholic priest in Germany with the aim of freeing poor families, in particular, from the misery imposed by usury. It foundered on the legality of usury, which led eventually to a corruption of the idea. Credit Unions themselves began to practice usury for the purpose of maintaining the value of their deposits against inflation, which had its source in the continued resort to false money, and usury in the wider national economy. Credit Unions today are very little different from the Banks or Building Societies against which they compete except in the rates applicable, and in the amounts which they are able to loan being much smaller. Yet in principle the idea itself is sound.

There is absolutely no reason why Credit Unions, with government support, could not be returned to their original function. Since every depositor would not require the money to build all at once, it would be possible for deposits to be lent out without interest to young families starting out to buy their own home. When that loan was repaid, much faster in the absence of the massive levy, it would be available for a new buyer. All that is required is that each lender should have saved a consistent and minimum amount for a number of years before taking out their own loan for there to always be enough on hand for the next. Since the value of sound money is unchanging, there is no need to protect the deposits value by recourse to interest being charged from borrowers and added back to deposits. For smaller unproductive loans than house mortgages, the repayment time would be even speedier. To this three things must be added. *Firstly*, all loans should have an administration fee - not burdensome - which would go towards the possibility of default. *Secondly*, the CU should take a small interest on all productive loans, since this is not only moral, but also practical. It would have the effect of giving something to all members - an incentive. It would also increase the fund of wealth available to loan out. *Thirdly*, so as to ensure that the productive loan does not dominate at the expense of the non-productive, but socially useful, loan, it could be laid down in law that a given percentage

of funds must be spent on the non-productive. In this way, especially active and successful Credit Unions's would be prevented from becoming a kind of new racketeering bank system.

The advantage to all members of the Credit Union are obvious since the dream of owning a home is almost universal, and consequently involvement by the whole community would be equally universal. Moreover when we talk of social effects, as opposed to those of usury, we would see the creation of mutual interdependence in the community, never a bad thing even in itself.

In these two things, the establishment of sound money and the elimination of usury, we would have reconstructed the foundations of economic life. We would have taken a long step back from the brink as it were, and as patriots we might well be surprised that we had done considerable damage to our liberal adversaries in the socio-political field as well. They are not enough in themselves to ensure Justice and Freedom of their own accord, but they do provide the necessary environment. It remains perfectly possible and, therefore, predictable that the free play of market forces, undirected by any motive save the maximisation of profit, will perpetuate both the injustices in society as well as continuing to direct the economy along lines contrary to the Common Good. While having sensible regard for the rights of private property, sustainable prosperity, with the accompaniment of widespread ownership, must have priority. This sounds very like re-distribution of wealth. Yes, it is, but not as the socialist means it, for true prosperity is founded on independent ownership of the means by which one's livelihood is obtained by as many people as possible. It cannot have anything to do with the expropriation of property from legitimate owners in order to give it away, which has been done by plain theft in Communist countries, and by the subtlety of ferocious income taxes in socialist and social democratic ones.

The Catholic State, viewed as the sum of its families, must have the material welfare of those families first on its economic agenda. Prosperity for the ordinary person means, if not ownership as a means to provide for a decent livelihood, then at least a good living wage. The current regime is virulently anti-family, discriminating against the married couple and, as if to add insult to irreparable injury, making the foundation of a truly natural family impossible. To some extent the advent of the contraceptive culture in Ireland has been due, less to a moral malaise than an economic one, with couples being forced to wait, firstly, an unnatural length of time before getting married, and thereafter every incentive and penalty is directed to ensure that they cannot afford children in the natural number, in the natural way. It has become practically impossible for the average wage earner to support a family of more than one child without a working wife, and even then the hardships heavily discourage more than two or at most three. The consequences in a much depleted birth rate are becoming obvious, though more so in other European countries who adopted these plainly stupid policies some time ago. Though others are now trying desperately to reverse this trend, the Irish government steams ahead.

A National government would not only have the right, but the duty, to discriminate positively in favour of the natural family founded on indissoluble marriage. Apart from moral good judgement, it is now generally recognised as economic common sense. Taxation

policy, in particular, would be re-directed to re-defining the fair wage as a living family wage, with a greater burden falling on those without dependants.

One of the few really positive developments in recent times has to be the negotiation between the so-called social partners of the Programmes for Economic and Social Development. Positive, that is, insofar as inherent in the idea is the co-operation for the Common Good of the various power brokers in the economy, with decisions ranging from social policy to such basic matters as pay and conditions being ironed out within an overall context. Philosophically, the notion of social partnership has within it the germ of a new conception of the interrelationship of employer and employee in a shared fate, as well as bringing a greater understanding of the holistic foundations of a healthy work atmosphere leading to a healthy economy. There is no doubt that much of the actual economic progress made in this country can be accredited to the social partnership model. It is very unfortunate then that the full potential of this idea has not been unlocked, especially insofar as its limited application is so widely accepted as beneficent. There are several reasons for this.

For one thing they lack structure, being surprisingly *ad hoc*, with no real inquiry into the extent to which the negotiators have the right to speak on behalf of the interests they purport to represent. A close examination of the Trade Union movement as currently constituted would be very revealing. The average member of a Union is, however, thoroughly aware that they are for the most part ruled by a self-perpetuating left-wing clique. Sadly, sane voices are discouraged by the nature of this clique from putting themselves forward for Union elections. In consequence, most such elections, while technically democratic, actually present a very narrow range of candidates, who are of the same anti-Irish mind. They may be clever enough at public relations not to voice their more extreme opinions to the media, which is more than willing to co-operate with them, but one can hardly doubt that in negotiations this bent comes very much to the fore. That being so, the P.E.S.P.s have acted as an opportunity for the extreme Left to influence national policy on a grand scale, an opportunity which the Irish people repeatedly deny their political parties at the polls. The government, which is itself leftist but in self-serving denial of it, can use such negotiations to agree "*under pressure*" to measures which they would not like to defend as their own policy.

For another, they are very narrowly focused agreements with only certain interests represented, and many important voices absent from the table. These are, in consequence, unheard and uncared for, in spite of their substantial impact on the well-being of the economy in ways not immediately recognisable. To create a truly effective agreement, surely no person in the country should be without some representation of some kind? Efforts to redress this more recently are largely ineffective since, if we are honest, the government is only concerned with signing up economic interests. They could ignore, say, a failure to agree a deal with an organisation representing women working in the home, on the grounds that they are unlikely simply to down tools on their own families.

The manner in which the negotiation is structured tends to perpetuate the confrontational nature of bargaining in this country. That is the core flaw. Once every few years, we see the interplay of forces struggling to assert the level of power which

they can wield to maximum advantage. In practice, the potential for the Common Good is lost in the scramble for the largest possible share, which can be extorted.

Having said that, there does appear to be an implicit recognition that chaotically undirected development is not of itself an absolute good, and that the market as such is not always right. That there is, contrary to the Thatcherite thesis, such a thing as Society, and broader interests than "*grab all you can now*" selfishness. The logic opens up the idea of vocational organisation and, although it needs to be more seriously advanced, its advent at all on the national agenda is to be welcomed.

Vocational organisation on a developed scale is not only practicable, but will become an absolute necessity in the post-capitalist society. The combination of persons in vocational organisations in defence of their own interests, within the framework of the Common Good is envisaged, not as demands made by violence, cunning or fraud, but rather claims resting on Justice.

Justice between worker and employer, justice between competing firms, and justice between the various sectors and groups in society, is an *ipso facto* of sustainable growth and recovery. It is a sorry fact that, because there is no organisation in economics, there is no rule of order or even decency - only unrestrained competition, vicious and inherently destructive in the longer term.

In that environment, employers seek the maximum amount of work for the minimum wages, while workers seek as little work as possible for the greatest wage. It becomes a test of relative strengths and wills, in which now one, then the other, triumphs. What is unchanging is that both lose out in real terms.

Further antagonisms are created where, for example, industry inevitably impacts agriculture or vice-versa in the same confrontational manner. It is essential to the Just Society that confrontation gives way to a superior sense of the Common Good. This is the principal and legitimate limitation upon the right of ownership. It must be understood that for a free society, the extent to which this can be imposed is limited, so the role of the State is to create and maintain the structures, in which naturally occurring associations find a way of co-ordinating rather than opposing interests. It suffices to say that, in principle, everything should be done to facilitate the natural development of vocational organisation along the lines so presciently envisaged by *Quadragesimo Anno*, following on naturally from the ideas of *Rerum Novarum*.

In this context too, it is well to take account of the appalling extent to which Irish society in recent years has become class ridden in a new and more vicious form than has any precedent. It is the height of foolishness not to have regard to just how dangerous it is, particularly in that it comes at a time of mounting difficulty. One might even wonder how tenuously close the very fabric of our society is to disintegration, given the almost complete breakdown of community life, as well as the ghettoization of certain socio-economic groups. Middle class snobbery is to some degree fuelled by rising house prices, which leave them with little or no contact outside their own class. This is not to say that there is not a reverse snobbery, with some working class and unemployed people envious to the point of hatred of their better off fellow countrymen. Even the concept of fellow countrymen, as such, has become so much myth and melody set against the material scramble.

The socialist propagandists, openly and otherwise, are always there to lend a hand to class hatred in their efforts to build a power base upon divisions and animosity. Some matters do, no doubt, have their justification, but the socialist has a vested interest in not finding a solution. At the other end, the Progressive Democrats emerged as a partisan class party to foster a cruel reaction.

Within the Catholic State, it is unthinkable that the continued promotion of the atmosphere of "class warfare" could be permitted, so detrimental as it is to the vital national interest, and not even primarily in the area of economics. The application of equitable economics, within the framework of the vocationally organised structures for wages and conditions bargaining, as well as a concerted tackling of unemployment, has an objective far beyond business and finance. Over and above all that comes the national sense of community of shared interest and objectives, diffused prosperity and Social Justice, giving birth again to a revival of the nationalist ideal.

If, however, the State is to take on so many new functions, heretofore abdicated, it must be ever vigilant of the centripetal tendency to draw all functions to itself. The focus of attention should always be on the creation of the environment for a just and prosperous economy, not on being the whole of the economy, or tying up by structures, boards and regulations the sane hand of initiative and enterprise. Nominal rights of private ownership are worthless if bound by manifold and needless restrictions at every turn. This is particularly evident in the agricultural sector, which has long since lost practical autonomy. It will be obvious that the revenues required by the government to fulfil its proper role of maintaining the powers of useful intervention, and the provision of necessary welfare, do not amount anywhere near to the enormous consumption of the National Product, which is currently the case.

We ought, then, to seek the radical withdrawal of the State from ownership, in particular of the many industrial concerns which would be better run in private hands. The corrupt, and in great part, deliberate mess made of privatisation in Britain should not put us off this task, but should provide lessons to be learned. There remains the legislative power, used sparingly, to ensure that vital considerations are more than adequately protected, without requiring direct involvement. Moreover, there is the issue of the enormous costs of maintaining the nationalised stakes, a bill which has to be picked up, unfairly, by the taxpayer. As private shareholders, they wouldn't, and probably couldn't. It is because political pressures can be brought forcefully to bear upon the State, as an employer, that businesses they are involved in are invariably run with astonishing inefficiency and incompetence, not to mention the scant regard for customer service.

Other whole areas too of State intervention must be rolled back, its place logically taken by private initiative with a view to releasing the pent up energy and resources currently swallowed by bureaucratic meddling and waste.

Taxation, which obviously needs to be equitably reformed, needs to be radically reduced in real terms. Reductions are immediately possible with the removal of the tribute of interest paid on the National Debt - which accounts for most of the money we pay in taxes - but more reductions are possible and will give the economy that necessary push for real growth it so urgently requires.

In this regard, it seems inevitable that a phased return to taxation primarily at the

point of spending, and weighted to luxury goods not so adversely affecting the less well off, is most practical. It will not be possible to dispense with income taxes altogether, but we are talking about a level which the PAYE worker of today would hardly recognise.

It will be necessary to maintain some form of differential tax, because the idea - as explained by Belloc in *The Restoration of Property* - is that tax begins at zero for the poor, progressively rising - slightly at first, so as to encourage a myriad of small business which employ 10 - 15 people - and then at a certain point, they become punitive. This means, in practice, that a family could run one shop and pay little; they open a second and they lose a reasonable bit more; at 3 shops it begins to bite heavily; at 4 shops, they will be asking whether it is worthwhile; at 5 shops, no one would do it. This is done so as to avoid chain stores. Equally, it is obvious that the truly Catholic economic form is the Guild System, though in our time it would also be extended to Agriculture, which it never was during the Middle Ages. This being so, the differential tax would be impossible to avoid, because the Guild structure would not allow it, and it would eliminate a whole tier of State bureaucracy with the consequent savings. Thus a differential rate is more effective in maintaining small property; the Guild System provides an excellent form for collection that makes it easier; the State's expenditure is greatly reduced, whilst its income is increased proportionately; regulation would be easy to effect and could be adapted very quickly to any urgent and real change in the country's circumstances.

These are just some of the more obvious steps, which could be taken by any determined government. It would release us, for the first time in living memory, from the straitjacket of strictly conventional thinking, which argues for all the things which are actually at the root of the problems. Just as we cannot have no abortion, without radically reassessing our relationship with the other European nations, nor can we reassess that relationship without altering the economic realities which led us to the door of the Federal State. To be sure, there presently exists no political will for the introduction of major change, and tinkering with the System, as it currently stands, is the limit of public discourse and debate. However, progressions have a way of making themselves felt, in spite of the powers-that-be, and within the system, Federal Europe or no, are the seeds of its own collapse. In the meantime, it is not enough simply to blame the politicians, for while they may benefit from the assiduous propaganda on behalf of the *status quo*, it is, nonetheless, the acquiescence of the general population that is the problem in the final analysis. This is because the vast majority are only concerned - not alarmed as they should be - by the trend of events. Put simply, it's their own fault. Whatever their attitude now, certain, inevitable developments are going to shake that passivity to its foundations.



When The Music Stops.

Prophets of doom are so common nowadays that it is difficult to be seen to add to them, without tainting any analysis with their brand of lunacy. Everything, from the mildly pessimistic to the absolutely bizarre, is presented to the public, and always with an urgent certainty that, tomorrow or at best the day after, the world as we have known it will come to an end. For the most part, the dates announced for calamity come and go without a murmur, and the same people may be found again asserting a new date, even a new disaster, but with the same conviction and as little sense as the last time. What is noticeable, though, is the increasing willingness of people to believe such things, which indicates a basic feeling of unease amongst people that something is not quite right, and that something must give. This cultural phenomenon, common to all Western societies, is what is really interesting.

For the purpose of this book, and the presentation of a reasoned questioning of the direction of our own country, we should be careful to keep ourselves within the realm of the possible and likely, without being dogmatic as to the nature of those problems; equally, we should not crow that all that we oppose is imminently to collapse. Having said that, however, if the economic life of the nation is bound to a mathematically provable course which is not for the good, we may certainly, without losing the run of ourselves, assert that something must give. We can then give thought to what the nature of that 'give' will be. It is not a question of discussing "when", since this is governed by facts which we cannot know. In any case, it is only of peripheral importance when viewed against the monumental questions of *why and how*.

We are living in an inherently flawed economic system, which requires not an accident to throw the whole game away, but rather has required a series of accidents to hold the thing together. It cannot be an indefinite proposition, and it won't be.

The modern system has its origins in the Industrial Revolution and, to some extent, is still working on economic theories of the same arcane nature. Whether it realises it or not, the West has been living for some time on the doctrine of Mercantilism, although most economists fancy that we have moved beyond that, through a whole variety of ideas ranging from Marxism through to Keynesianism and Monetarism. These have not solved the problem at the core of Capitalism, which is the matching of demand to productivity. Mercantilism seeks to do this by exporting products to undeveloped markets, whereby the product will be paid for by raw materials for further production. The elaboration of this policy led directly to the American War of Independence, when the British government sought to impose it upon a colonial people with the wherewithal to resist. In essence, the colony provided raw materials in commodity form to the mother country, which manufactured products of such a nature and volume as to saturate the home market and sold the excess back to the colony. Vital to the system was that the colony should never develop the means to produce its own goods, and the inherent flaw is that if the colony does not do so, then in the long run the return of raw materials to the mother country will not be of sufficient volume for the colony to afford to buy the product.

Enter Capitalism, with its emphasis on the large scale production, and the removal of any competition, and a crisis looms already. The need to gain advantage over competitors in the same industry means cutting costs to maximise profits. One obvious method is to keep the wage bill to the absolute minimum. For the individual company, it makes sense to replace workers with machines, or force them to accept the lowest possible wages. In the earliest stages of Capitalism, before the rise of Organised Labour and the technological advances of this century in particular, the latter was the favoured method, resulting in misery for countless thousands of families and individuals. The former has been brought into greater use recently, as well as a new method, closely related, which is the complete relocation to parts of the world where expectations of living standards are very low.

On a macro-economic level, however, this is a disaster. Since the worker can produce so much more of the product than he or she can use, this must be sold. If, however, wages are kept down in any given company, you can be sure that they are similarly restricted in every other. The result is that the Capitalist enterprise has depressed the overall demand for the product, while simultaneously increasing the amount of product. A growing surplus must be sold abroad. It will be obvious, however, that not everyone in the world market can export more than they import, even though that would be the only way to sustain the system. While exploiting the undeveloped markets of the Third World, some staving off can be achieved, but since the exploitation requires that they remain undeveloped, it also ensures that there is a limit on what they can buy. If, as is now the case, by relocation, the multi-national corporation seeks to further reduce costs by producing the goods in the Third World, using the cheapest and least skilled labour, it must cause the home market to shrink as total wages, and therefore ability to buy, becomes depressed there without noticeably increasing the ability to buy from Third World labourers. Thus, the unemployed and the low paid of the West cannot buy the volume of products that they need to sell. A crisis develops necessarily. Indeed, it is developing, and evermore rapidly.

Here an unusual example arises, where a crisis might have developed to be dealt with clearly and definitely before most of the damage was done, but instead a novel, essentially temporary and, ultimately, fatal solution was devised to stave off the inevitable. There entered the intermediary of Finance Capital, which we dealt with in the previous chapter. If the Third World could not afford the products of the industrial West now, then they could borrow the money and pay later when, presumably, their own exports provided the means. Contrary to expectation, though entirely predictable, was that the developed industries found themselves competing to sell yet more products on a world market, which was already glutted. The response of the developing world was to resort to cash crops such as coffee and others, which the West could not produce, but which would fail to meet the requirements not only of repaying the debt, which in fact might have been comparatively easy, but the interest charged in the same usurious way. They were confronted with the impossible problem that not every country in the world can export to a value more than they import, and do so indefinitely.

Thus, by attempting to leap ahead of the laws of economic gravity and not having, as the West possessed centuries earlier, the New World, the Third World

found itself unable to pay its debts. Worse, the very volume of cash crops, which they sought to sell, reduced the price rather than increased the gain.

The thorny issue of Third World debt is certainly at the forefront of any reasoned thinking on world issues today and, oddly enough, - for few things are dealt with with such pragmatism - the Finance Capitalists have been willing to see the logic of progressive debt renunciation. This is not actually a loss in the terms which ordinary people would understand a loss, insofar as they simply created the financing for the debt in the original instance. Yet, there seems a willingness to understand that what cannot be paid will not be paid, and that it is better to acknowledge this in advance of catastrophe. The difficulty here is that they have not been willing to go the whole distance, and have sought instead to lay a payable tribute instead, much as they have done in the West. In the long run, this reduces the demand for Western products still further than it might have been had the process been allowed to take its course. The movement of development to the Third World has not helped at all, since it has only served to increase the payable tribute, and lessened the extent of debt renunciation.

In the West, however, where the prospect has not yet been considered, the result has been calamitous. The very means upon which they - meaning us - felt able to repay our vast debts is fast disappearing, and the weight of the tribute on National Debts, in the form of taxation, grows heavier. The Third World now feeds modern products into our markets, and generally does so at a greatly reduced cost, which ruins any competitor which is European or North American. The effect is to further depress demand, while such demand as there is is fed by corporations working increasingly on Third World labour. Unwilling to the last to accept the fact that absolute free trade carries a price, Europe responds with the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty to protect wages and conditions, which cannot sensibly be protected in the global market.

Do not be misled that we yet possess considerable advantage vis-à-vis the Third World. This is nothing more than the mathematical certainty working itself out in actual progression, and not at all a sign of development in new directions, which will iron out all difficulties. To be sure, there are areas in which we will probably always have the head start, particularly that of information technology, but by their nature these cannot be large employers and, consequently, supporters of the economy as such. The technological edge belongs not only to the educated workforce, but the intellectually adept, and reality tells us that is the top few percent of any population, West-East or North-South.

Why then has the collapse of the current economic system not already occurred if the mathematical certainty has been developing since the dawn of modern Capitalism, which is now at conventional estimation more than two centuries old? In the beginning, there were the colonial empires, which combined political with economic power, and were thus able for some time to impose the mercantilist philosophy, preventing the subjected colonies from developing competitor industries. At the same time, they exploited these areas as sources for raw materials. The populations of the colonies of Africa and Asia, in addition to some extent South America, were used to living at the subsistence level, and required manufactured goods to raise that standard of living; at least for those living in the urban centres.

North America, with its primarily European immigrant population, was first to resist, knowing well that the economic policy was one of subjugation to the interests of the Mother Country, Britain; and knowing too that its own long term development depended on breaking free. Hence the birth of the United States. Even this was only the start of a process of competition from that quarter, which reached its full fruition in the late nineteenth century. The United States too had its own "*manifest destiny*" in the exploitation of the vast hinterland of that continent to consume and absorb.

Then there was the economic fact of war, which was occasional, repetitive, and always destructive. Quite apart from the rights and wrongs of any conflict, war is a great consumer of productivity, in men and in material, which must be replaced. As an economic fact they have always resulted in post-war booms, generally more so for the victor. Naturally, the absence of total free trade plays a part here, for the victor nation replaced its own damage without resorting completely to outside imports which might have, and in the aftermath of more recent conflicts, has served to benefit parties not involved in the conflict. However, since the Second World War, war as such has tended to be low intensity, and has not consumed destructively the same level of product. Other factors have intervened.

There has been the intervention of Finance Capital mentioned earlier, the consequences of which, in the longer term, will be to make things much worse. As if the lesson were entirely unlearned from the Great Depression of 1929, there has been a massive expansion of consumer credit on a scale not previously seen. What many people do not realise, or think about, is the extent to which the average person in the West lives on borrowed money. We are not just talking about the borrowed money of his or her government, but borrowed as personal credit - a volume which dwarfs the National Debts. The largest part of this is formed of house mortgages, and lays a great tribute in interest upon the average family income. It acts, during a credit boom, as a great boost to the economy in borrowings, but in the longer term, it depresses demand by requiring, not only its repayment but considerably more than the original sum. Added to this is the relatively new phenomenon of short term credit, which is far more likely to get out of hand, and is likely to do so very quickly once the bubble bursts.

The similarities between our own time and the Twenties are many and varied, but invariably they are of an enormous order unheard or unthought of by any previous generation. In the past, there was a propensity to borrow with a degree of prudence now entirely absent. While one of the underlying principles of sound money is its stable value as the purchaser of goods, within the current system, we have inflationary/deflationary cycles related to the supply of credit or bank-created money in circulation. Peculiar to the latter half of the last century has been the uninterrupted inflationary spiral of constantly rising prices, which has made even debt burdened spending a "sensible thing". Individuals find that it costs less to buy on credit today, even with interest, than to buy tomorrow at the inflated price. This is true too of many businesses, both small and large, which have invested vast quantities of borrowed capital in plant and equipment at today's prices, knowing that the gap between that and tomorrow's price is less than the interest added. Moreover, there is the human tendency, which is easy to whet, to want more and more. It is fed now by advertising on a much more

sophisticated and grand level than previously thought possible. Everything we want, we want *now*!

Thus, there has been a near certain bet on inflation, especially in regard to investment in property. The assumption, almost always proven true, is that the value of property bought will rise, and the relative debt diminish to the point where, even with interest payable, the mortgagee has spent his money well, and is left, the sacrifices of repayment notwithstanding, with an asset well worth the effort. If he were to sell, he would regain all or more than all of the cost. The middle classes, in particular, are notorious for betting on inflation in terms of real estate, which is to say the family home. Twenty year mortgages are the norm on huge prices, confident in the faith that increased prices will of themselves, firstly, continue to raise the value of the house relative to what was paid, and, secondly, reduce the real cost of the repayments, which may be crippling in the first years. Since banks and building societies commonly allow for mortgages with just 10% downpayment, the result is that most mortgages holders are dependent on inflation to make their investment work. Already we find the occasional downturns in the booming housing market catch many in a negative equity situation, whereby the outstanding loan exceeds the value of the property. These, and other bets on inflation, beg an obvious if unasked question: What if there was to be a period of sustained deflation? Or more precisely: *why hasn't there been already?*

The factors which have sustained the production system, in spite of all logic, have not only done so, but maintained an inflation more proper to demand exceeding supply. Here we approach the crux of post-war boom, as well as the inevitable collapse. Recalling that a few paragraphs previously, we noted the inflationary effects of war in its consumption of productivity in what is a wholly wealth consuming activity, we come across this most peculiar situation. In economic terms, the world has continued to be at war on a world-wide scale ever since the end of what we now call the Second World War.

The enormous boom, particularly in the American economy, following on 1945 was founded on, in the first instance, the need to replace much of ruined Europe, and, secondly, fuelled by rising birthrates which might be called a natural reason for economic growth on the demand side. There ought to have been a crisis, or at least a levelling out, for the United States, during that war, converted a good deal of industry to military production, and supplied the Soviet Union and the other Allies with an enormous amount of material, in varying proportions to prosecute the conflict. What is important to realise is that, though the materiel in tanks, planes, artillery and the like, might well have been destroyed, the expansion, investment, plant machinery and personnel, diverted from civilian production, remained. They would, normally, as usually happens at the end of a war, have flooded the labour market and left much industrial capacity useless and idle. This certainly occurred at the end of the First World War, and contributed in no small measure to the reluctance of American industrialists to mobilise resources for the second. The war itself might prove too short to justify the investment for production, unless you carry on afterwards as if it had not ended.

This is precisely what happened. With the advent of Superpower rivalry, considerably more imagined than real, the military industrial complex continued to churn out armaments at a rate practically undiminished by German or Japanese

surrender. It has gone on and on, keeping much of the potential production capacity from consumer goods for the production of military materials at a level which could not ever conceivably have been used. The extent to which the United States has crippled its long term prospects by this singular form of madness will only become apparent in the coming years, but it suffices to note that that nation has become, for the first time in history, a net debtor, and as such cannot carry on very much longer as before. The collapse of the Soviet Union was caused not by its internal difficulties, which it might well have suppressed for several decades, and certainly not by "people power", which is a not very funny joke for the millions who have died in futile resistance to Communism. It was not by a few placards in the streets, nor even by ethnic problems which had been superficially suppressed, that the Communist idea faltered, but largely by the pressure to maintain the arms race against the United States, which in the early Eighties sought to turn it up a notch. This American action was not because it was inadequately defended, nor was it a matter of dealing the final death blow to the "evil empire", but rather because domestic economic problems, forced by an increasing unwillingness of world markets to buy U.S. product, jostled the American government into the idea of taking up yet more slack through military spending. The logic of putting off problems until tomorrow was undeniable, and certainly gave the Republicans three terms in the White House - until George Bush began to look too clumsy for words.

In classic Keynesian fashion, the economy received a boost from rearmament coming out of the recession of the early Eighties, and it has ridden upon the crest ever since. Of course, this was financed *by debt*. This has reached chronic levels, and the continued growth in American deficits cannot be maintained. Faced with the after-taste of Keynes, the Americans find themselves with an extreme downward pressure on demand, as a result of interest payments on the debt. The effort to justify military spending with the *Enemy of the Month Club*, - Manuel Noriega, Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic etc - may succeed within domestic politics, but surely cannot convince either the Japanese or the Germans, who were willing to support the dollar on the international trading exchanges while that military force was seen to be protecting them from the real danger of the Soviet Union. Reluctance to pick up the bill in the face of imaginary threats from Third World powers, such as Iraq, is already in evidence.

Indeed, history will record the Gulf War as the apotheosis of American imperial overreach. At vast expense, and a bill yet mounting, the Gulf force crushed an insignificant military enemy to protect, firstly, Israel, which was only minimally threatened, and oil which the United States does not need. The corrupt regimes of that region are themselves losing grip, and the indigenous peoples will remember, without thanks, American endeavours to defend their "liberties". The U.S. is left only with faded glory. No power in the world can face them on the battle field, but then no real power in the world seeks to do so. They are faced in the economic field by forces leaner and unburdened, either by vested interest or by the equivalent wealth consuming debt. In short, we are seeing the end of the American Empire, and with it, the ability to consume products, military and otherwise, which have maintained the economic system since 1945. No serious reductions have yet been made in the military spending

of either the former Soviet Union or the United States, but inevitably they must come, as both nations are strung out on crisis levels of debt. The new Russia is likely to crack first, since the question for them is one of a starving populace. The effect of the end of the Cold War is, however, being felt among their Third World client states, where the Soviet Union for a long time has supported their ability to buy and consume, and justified huge quantities of American aid to neighbouring countries to prevent the domino effect. With that aid depleted, these nations find themselves already deeply in debt but without a big power guarantor. Their problems will multiply to a degree which we can hardly imagine, but in the context of our present area of examination, the most immediate effect will be a dramatic fall-off in their demand for Western products.

Russian industry must, sooner or later, be converted to civilian production, or at least stop its current production. The region's political volatility ensures that it will not receive the kind of developmental investment, which might help pick up the shattered pieces, as well as provide a market for capital products from the West. The government cannot borrow, since it has already done that to the limit. Stagnation, followed by regression, is inevitable. Politically, they could go any which way, which raises questions as to nuclear stockpiles, but this is a question to be dealt with further on. For the moment, we merely note only the overall reduction in demand within the global economy.

In the United States, electoral pressure, combined with a predictable unwillingness by a once great power to accept the situation, combines to ensure that serious reductions in military spending will be delayed to the last possible moment. Precisely the same occurred in Britain just before and especially after the war. It precipitated its quick imperial collapse, and converted it into an American puppet state. Similarly with the United States, it is only a question of time before it too goes under. When the Americans finally scale down this essentially false demand within their domestic economy the gap between their imports and exports will be massive. The likely political ramifications are a return to an *America First* position, as has been advocated by the occasional Republican Presidential candidate, Pat Buchanan. At the end of the day, it is a very large country with all the necessary resources to maintain such a position, and thus ought to come through the crisis, albeit in a very different form. The Americans will, of course, be confronted by the same questions concerning the nature of sound and false money, and their willingness to face these issues will mark how quickly they can recover.

For Ireland, where we have lauded ourselves on the achievement of a gap between imports and exports, the effect may not be quite instantaneous, but will certainly be devastating. As the global economy, to which we have committed ourselves, contracts by an unprecedented degree, more and more countries with whom we now have a so-called favourable balance of trade will scale down their imports, restrict them by tariffs and taxes, or simply in some cases take themselves out of the world system altogether. This may be forced upon them by International Finance which, responding to debt repudiation, will initially attempt to isolate the "guilty parties". With the advent of economic nationalism or bloc trading, governments around the world will be likely to take a much tougher stance on transfer pricing, which

moves taxable income away from their exchequer. This area of false growth will entirely disappear for us.

The very first sign of demand contraction will, of course, bring the unravelling of all the factors which have maintained the game up until now, and reveal many of the temporary "solutions" as the aggravations we have said here that they are. Consumer credit, which might have been the last resort, has already been exhausted as an option. In fact, many people are so entirely indebted that even the slightest reduction in their income would be enough to bring their finely balanced personal finances crashing down. In many cases the lending institutions have allowed people to borrow against future income prospects, rather than against actual wages. Industry, in a contracting market, will seek to curtail wage demands and reduce the workforce by redundancy, and will also attempt to reduce wages in real terms. Persons thus affected will not only fail to increase their demand on production, but will endeavour to reduce it to a minimum, beginning with defaulting on Hire Purchase agreements, while trying to forestall the worst case which is failing to meet the repayments on their main investment, housing. Production requirements will contract further as will employment growth, eventually giving way to overall employment reduction with the obvious consequence of even greater downward pressure on demand. It will be a vicious and terminal spiral.

The housing market, long fuelled by the natural assumption of inflation, will level out. This will quickly give way to a situation whereby, in uncertain times, people will not undertake the long term task of buying the family home. House prices thus reduced, many will find themselves in serious negative equity situation - simply put, they will be hopelessly and irremediably in debt. As they realise the strict advantages of defaulting and allowing repossession, the market will be glutted and prices forced down even further.

Unfortunately, the average Western citizen has totally ignored the prudence of saving, and thus will have no financial resources to fall back on in a crisis. As almost all credit, granted on assumptions now proven invalid, is reneged upon, either by choice or necessity, a contraction of money supply, which is largely a credit creation, will occur.

Governments worldwide, which find themselves similarly indebted, will be unable to finance through borrowing any of the public works which might restart or maintain demand. The option of increasing taxation will not be available. If it is attempted, it can only further depress demand. If it is not, the situation will develop uncontrollably. National debts, already a massive burden, will become unpayable. The weaker economies, firstly, will renounce such debt and, since there is no obvious means of enforcing repayment against sovereign nations, this will spread rapidly to all other nations.

Banks and other lending institutions will collapse, bringing in its wake the full consequences of their having created a largely artificial world economy. With many companies dependent on the credit which they have provided, they too will collapse. In short, the whole pack of cards will fall.

The Welfare State, as we have known it, will probably be one of the first casualties, since it will be unable to support the massive increase in recipients that this collapse will create. Ironically, the effect of dismantling its major provisions will be to further exacerbate the problem. The unemployed who, heretofore, were unable

to fuel the consumer boom at the upper end of the market, will find themselves unable to obtain the necessities of life. Politically-speaking, the reaction will be extreme, because a starving population is an angry one. That much at least we are assured by experience.

This analysis is based on the limited frame of reference, entirely capitalist in origin. In this fact lies both the tragedy and the hope. For example, it will not be as if farms are incapable of producing necessary food to feed, or that industry is incapable of providing the products which are truly needed. Nothing indeed will have happened, except that illusions, concerning the nature and working of economics, will have finally given way to reality. The length of time between the realisation of the error and its replacement by a realistic appraisal of the situation is precisely the length of time which the misery caused will last. The economic prescriptions of the previous chapter, while difficult to administer in the current atmosphere, would forestall the calamity now and provide lasting solutions for the future.

The primary task is, therefore, to advocate these changes now and consistently. All of our prescriptions presuppose an end to the global model and its premises. In the post-capitalist world, we will see the return of protectionist ideas, which have long been derided, but which are a secure foundation for the resurrection of a national economy. What will emerge will be a much greater emphasis on the autarchic model of self sufficiency within nations, which will not pit competitors of vastly different economic strength against one another.

Much has been said and written about the unfair trade practices that exist between the industrial and Third World nations, but such comments have in large part come from persons unconcerned with long term endeavours, and who are seeking to salve imaginary problems of conscience. Very few have been astute enough to note that the development of the Third World, in a Free Trade world economy, is one likely to destroy both them and us. In practice, they have found themselves with a layer of Western product-making corporations, producing goods for which they themselves have no market, and feeding that back to an already saturated First World market. On the other hand, they have been prevented from developing the basic foundations, which would allow them to feed their own populations. In other words, the global model has forced a development for which they were not, and are not, ready. They have skipped much of the intervening stages of development, common to all Western nations, and the skip has been fatal.

Much of Africa and Asia needs to forsake the idea of export, a situation which will be forced upon them in the future anyhow. Naturally, this will involve the renunciation of the unpayable national debts, which required the acquisition of foreign currency through exports to meet interest payments. In that regard, they will be no different from any other country, and cannot be isolated by a banking system which will effectively have lost its political and financial power. They may then be able to set about creating the beginnings of a viable agriculture, unhindered by foreign competition or overseas aid which has, paradoxically, crippled their efforts to do so. *When they are able to feed themselves, they can reasonably expect to set about creating a productive economy for themselves, and in their own way.*

For our part, we will not face the cheap labour competition, which accompanies globalism. This will allow us to create a true balance between demand and production, and which is vital to maintaining the standard of living to which we have become accustomed. In the short term, this necessitates a substantial expansion of home market demand to meet production currently exported, and this will be a problem for government. In the longer term, it means a slower growth rate, but one that excludes completely the cycle of boom and crash. Naturally, we will be faced by such questions as population growth or decline, and upon which the government can act only indirectly. Governments can act to raise demand by reducing taxation, and by redistributing the nature of their spending to allow people more money to spend rather than companies more money to invest. The substantial reduction in living standards which will result from the crisis will more than prepare people for the sacrifices which will have to be made.

Obviously, within this unfolding scenario, there are many imponderables. In the context of the European Union, efforts may be made to create a "Europe First" idea, and from it a trading bloc. This is unlikely, however, for reasons we mentioned earlier. Economic difficulties tend to increase tensions within Europe. Moreover, the Federalists are themselves probably too wedded to the Free Trade principle to function otherwise. Much of what happens in Europe will, in practice, be dictated by how far the process of integration has gone at the time of the collapse. Far more likely, however, is that the member states will be shaken profoundly, and seek to form a considerably different interrelationship based, perhaps, on special trade agreements that are mutually beneficial.

Some certainties do exist. The crisis will be no ordinary one, it will be a depression without precedent, a veritable destroyer of past assumptions and the paradigm of Capitalist avarice. By some means, we will have to find our way back to common sense and basic values. We must arrive at the most basic values - true for all times and all places - *Faith, Family and Nation*.



A Nation Once Again?

The events at Drumcree, and what followed throughout the Ulster province in the Marching Season of 1998, throw into high relief just how inane were the proclamations of peace everlasting that preceded and continued unabated, following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent referenda North and South. They illustrated, as perhaps nothing else could, that the true nature of the conflict in the North is beyond the control of much of the public face participants. The public representatives supposed, we are told, to speak for each community were found unable to comprehend the depth of feeling on either side and lost, in consequence, much of the credibility which they would surely be expected to bring to the Assembly designed to bring about peace. Northern Ireland was considerably more intransigent a problem than had been anticipated.

Understanding the various perspectives on the North is a very difficult thing to do. Just as in the South, immediately and for some time, after the Civil War, the political divide is essentially concentrated on the one basic question: whether or not the Six Counties remain in perpetual Union. The "*or not*" itself poses many questions, which have so far defied answer. If not the union, then what form should the province take: - independence, integration into a Thirty Two County Republic or what? Within each community, the issue has subdivided only insofar as whether to accept, in principle, the use of violence for the political ends or not. Within Unionism, the physical force argument has, to some extent, remained muted, but as any analyst could tell you that has more to do with the fact that the ballot box currently favours their basic proposition than any deep commitment to Constitutionalism as such. For Nationalists, there seems, and has seemed for some time, no way to make their agenda felt save to resort to a variety of extra-legal activities; though, equally, it would appear that a majority of that community does not support the IRA directly, or its political wing, Sinn Fein. Within both, of course, other political issues and ideas have been shelved, and this because, in part, in the nature of direct Westminster rule, their opinions are not sought on other matters except very rarely. It is, however, worth remembering that they exist.

The origins of the current conflict are older than any one living can possibly recall, since there is little use in viewing the problem within the narrow focus of what is euphemistically termed the "Troubles", and limited artificially to the last quarter century. In fact, their beginnings may generally be traced to the first involvement by Britain, militarily and politically, on this island, and specifically with the plantation of "loyal" Protestants in Ulster in 1619. As such, any useful review cannot but begin with a treatment of this question first. It raises enormous issues of rights and wrongs, which will not be discarded in the minds of the communities, regardless of the flowery rhetoric of either Dublin or London. It says nothing about one's opinion of the most current of controversies to note that the decision to plant Ulster at that time was monstrous in its idea and in its execution, and it has brought nothing but harm to all. Even if it is to be regretted deeply, it remains that it took place and it had, and has, consequences.

The Northern part of this island is populated with nearly one million persons who, being predominantly of Protestant religion, are committed to Britain. If not to the British government, then certainly to the concept of Britain wrapped up in various ideas about the Crown. They also possess, of course, some definite ideas about the South formed in their minds long before 1916, or any subsequent event. It is very easy to issue declarations, as some Thirty-Two County Republicans do, concerning putting such peoples fears at rest over time, but hardly very reasonable considering that in an effort just to resist Home Rule, this same body of persons were willing, whatever the irony involved, to face down the Imperial British Army; a fact which, as Pádraig Pearse noted well, few Southern nationalists at the time were willing to do. This has been, and doubtless continues to be, a courageous people united in one common resolve, which no amount of talking will likely shake. If push comes to shove, they will even now fight, and fight hard.

To speak from a Southern perspective, and say that one cannot understand such fears, is to miss the point entirely. No southerner, Catholic or Protestant, can truly be said to share their religion, which mixes a potent cocktail of fervour with their singular form of nationalism. Moreover, no southerner has shared their history, which is very much different from the rest of the island. Indeed, even a cursory look lends some credence to their claim to have been a different nation, insofar as their experiences were so different. While in the Republic and nationalist areas of the North, it is common to speak of having endured British colonialism, such a thought would never enter the mind of a Unionist. His history is one of proudly sharing in the glories of Empire, bound by sacrifice to the Transvaal and the Crimea, to the fields of Flanders in a union of death with Scots, Welsh, and English in an equality, which though largely imaginary, nonetheless, serves as a powerful evocation. The Penal Laws, with their ruthless subjugation and persecution of Catholics, was at the time a foundation of their ascendancy, and if a little embarrassing afterwards by no means was it seared into the collective memory in the way it was for those who suffered them. Protestant Ulster knew very little more of the potato famine than did its English counterpart, since for a variety of reasons, most of them accidental, the Protestant working class had already been largely taken from the fields by the industrialisation around Belfast and Derry. In any case, those who remained on the land were in the main small to medium owners, who did not share the landlord experience in any real sense.

Those who speak of a Protestant Republican tradition, noting Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmett among others, miss not one but several points. *Firstly*, that the tradition, which was unable to strike deep roots among the oppressed southern Catholics, was hardly likely to have impressed the more or less contented population of the North East corner. There has been no rebellion to note in Ulster since the Plantations, which succeeded at least in that regard. *Secondly*, the secular ideas of Tone and Emmett, originating in the masonic French Revolution, found no resonance in a Protestantism every degree as fervent as the Catholicism of the others. They had every reason to fear the restrictions of religion inherent in the secular idea, and found no comfort in the notion of equality, when the facts of circumstance seemed to them to show their superiority in both religion and culture, but especially in religion. To

some extent, there is some validity to this notion, since the theology of Protestant thinkers, such as Calvin, were in all places, if not indispensable to Industrial Capitalism, then at least very much conducive thereto. *Thirdly*, it seems obvious but necessary to point out that such a tradition is intellectual, whereas the cultural experience of a people soaks into every mind, high or low brow, in ways which are not immediately understandable but very much so.

Consequently, it does not much matter whether one believes that all the people on this island are equally Irish or not. The fact remains that close on one million people note that as a geographical fact well enough, but as a political idea reject it entirely. Pure geography is always useless when considering political issues. It is perhaps the product of being an island nation that has produced the notion. No German, regarding the various changes in borders, would think so, and no Pole, since so very often he had no borders to speak of, would think so. The Nationalist may say that the island of Ireland forms a natural political unit, but the Unionist might well respond that the British Isles archipelago form such a natural unit. As such, the argument has no useful meaning. For our purposes at this point, let us resolve to recognise that a million such people live on this island, and have not, nor are likely to wish, to share government with the rest of us.

This is not to say that they are contented with the present situation, merely that they cannot imagine a viable formula, which would place them in a comparable or better position. They have to be unhappy with direct rule from Westminster. The only proponents of full integration with the UK polled so very badly in the elections, for the so-called Peace Forum, that this much is made clear. Naturally, they desire the government of the province to return to the province. Britain will not tolerate another Stormont, nor indeed do they themselves really believe that they could sustain such a Northern government without the most extensive British support. The events of the late Sixties and early Seventies, preceeding the introduction of direct rule, proved that, and at that time their Nationalist opponents were considerably less organised than now. So, though discounted as such, they have no option but to oppose change at all and every stage, whatever propagandist face they present to the public opinion of Britain or the Republic concerning their willingness to negotiate. There is, therefore, nothing to negotiate with them given their current mindset, and attempts to do so are such as to give only impressions of progress. They will pick a time and a place to become implacable, preferably one of high sounding tone - references to "terrorism" and other such things - but if necessary, they will go even amid the worst public opinion.

At the heart of this attitude may well be that knowledge of past wrongs continuously and strenuously denied. Somewhere deep down, they must be aware that their Cause has stood on the ground of crude majoritarianism for too long, without foundation in natural right or justice. Certainly, as the Census figures in 1967 revealed, the majority of school children at primary level sent them into the most vicious panic, just as they aroused the latent sense of identity and solidarity in injustice among the Catholics. The fact that time and numbers were in the medium to long term vying against them must have motivated their actions at that time and since. Though now more restrained, only so by force of world opinion as its pressures unfold in British policy.

The Unionists, however moderate in rhetorical terms, must see in any change further dilution of privileges built up over the centuries, since all change has been for them to the worse. While the ballot box speaks the right answer for them, they will remain for the most part the more moderate of the two communities, and support for paramilitaries on their side will attract no appreciable endorsement. Mark well, however, that when it does not do so, they are likely, whether the British are there or not, to unleash a pent up force of such ferocity that even those troubled years of riot and plain pillage, which marked the end of Stormount, will pale in comparison.

The historical experience of the Nationalist tradition in Ulster is completely at odds with this picture. They shared almost all of the tribulations of those in the Republic and, insofar as their experience was different, it was generally worse. The arrival of the Planters, which was a complete failure in the South, succeeded in the first instance in robbing their forebears not only of their natural leaders in the clans, nor even of just their property rights, but of physical existence on the land, which had belonged to them for generations untold. They had few landlords, for the new lords of the land of Ulster would not have them at all. Their movement to the border counties and to the still predominantly Catholic parts of the Six County area was marked by tragedy and a bitterness unequalled anywhere else previous to that time.

Now, while people may say that it was long ago, and how could it affect the agenda of serious people in modern political discourse, such a statement is to miss the historical chain of events. Parents pass on grievances to the children and give them a name, in this instance "the Protestants". Children remember and, as parents, pass them on again to a new generation. The fuel of those inherited grievances is bound to ignite fresh grievances, since each generation seeking redress is bound to conflict and needs to be suppressed. Thus, although giving no obvious appearances of such, the Civil Rights Movement of the late Sixties has its origin in the primary grievance, the denial of civil rights inherent in the first plantations.

The Nationalist tradition, then, is primarily one of resistance, and bears the grudges of many generations. Just as the iron will of Loyalism to maintain the Union will not go away simply because pious rhetoric of peace and harmony has reached new levels, neither will the determination of the Catholics not to take it lying down any more. As such, it would appear that an unstoppable force is approaching an immovable object, the consequences of which are as unproven in politics as they are in physics. Suffice to note that it is hardly likely, in present circumstances, that there will be a sudden discovery, in a talking shop like the Assembly, of a formula, which has eluded many of the greatest Irish and sincere British minds for several centuries.

Speaking of the nationalist tradition, one needs to address in a forthright manner the whole question of the IRA. Most public discussion of it in recent years has been worse than useless, centring as it does on absurd pronouncements. The most obvious is the *ad hominem* declaration that violence never achieves anything. It is no comment whatever on the IRA campaign to note simply that this is nonsense in both theory and practice. All States, taking their so respectable seats at the United Nations, owe their existence and their maintenance of power to violence. The Republic was founded on violence, as militant republicans are quick to point out, but more generally

the United Kingdom was founded on violence as was France, Germany, Italy and any other modern nation you care to mention. The United States, which so often with little excuse seeks to interfere in the affairs of Northern Ireland, was created on foot of violence against Britain directly and expanded with genocidal violence against the native Indian population of the North American continent. So the question is as such wrongly put. The issue is *when* and *where* violence is justified, and *when* and *where* it may be expected to achieve something, rather than whether it does so in principle, which very obviously it often does. The question is whether violence by the IRA is justified and whether in present circumstances it may be expected to achieve, or help to achieve, the ends which it has set itself.

We need not address that question here since it is not fundamental. What is important is that they believed both in the justification and the practicality, and that many people in Northern Ireland were inclined to agree with them. Votes for Sinn Féin have essentially been an acknowledgement of such agreement, while there is undoubtedly a wider latent sympathy for it both North and South, which does not necessarily show up in ballots cast.

To understand this, one must have regard to the events which led to the formation of the modern Provisionals, namely those events surrounding the Civil Rights Movement and the Unionist and British responses, particularly in the summer of discontent of 1969. Few people in the South remember those events, and those that do cannot claim to recall them as well as those who lived through them. The extraordinarily vicious triumphalism of the Protestant marching season that year and, subsequently, the ruthless manner in which the Northern State sought to suppress the Catholics, will, however, remain etched in the memory of Nationalists, especially in Derry and Belfast, for many more years to come. It could hardly be otherwise since the pages of that history are written in the blood of still living memory. They remember the use of the infamous 'B' Specials, the RUC auxiliary force, which variously beat and shot to death so many whose aims at that time were very much less than simple justice demanded, but whose demands were seen, probably correctly, as the thin end of a wedge to dislodge the Unionist ascendancy. They cannot be quickly expected to forget the Protestant mobs, armed sometimes from official stores, who sought to wreak havoc in Catholic neighbourhoods. It was not the sash their fathers wore that was terror to the Papish boys, but English guns turned on women and children.

Pious platitudes from Fianna Fail or Fine Gael governments on the merits of constitutionalism found their last hearing here too. Up until that time, there is no serious doubt that the Nationalists of the North always looked to Dublin to speak for them and defend them against the very worst that the Northern State might do, if they turned the mobs free. In a situation, where the nightmare scenario was unfolding in daily and unequal combat, the then Fianna Fail government under Jack Lynch made the promise that, if matters grew worse, the South would not "*stand idly by*". The promise made, it was outrageously broken. Matters worsened in ways indescribable to or by persons not present, but idly by the Republic stood, breaking faith directly for the first, but hardly the last, time with the Nationalist people of the North.

It was inevitable then, that these people would seek to defend themselves. Would the peace-inspiring party politicals have them abandon their wives and children

to fate, on the theory that violence achieves nothing? Never again would these people trust Dublin, and it seems unlikely while Fianna Fail is presented to them that they ever will.

When the riots of that year began, the IRA of the time could lay their hands on neither volunteers nor weapons, while the leadership under Cathal Goulding was concerned more with the finer points of Marxist philosophy than the plight of the real people of Northern Ireland. By the time the most immediate crisis was over, the Provisional IRA had been formed as a split from the Goulding faction, thereafter known as the Official IRA. The Provisionals not only had the guns and the volunteers, but the considerable gratitude of many in the North, who would see them as the defenders of the Catholics, when there was no-one else. In this sense, the Provisional IRA might well bear the stamp "*Made in Dublin and London*" and, ironically, the Unionists themselves bear a great deal of the responsibility for the "terrorism" they now suffer. For it was the betrayal by Dublin, the incompetent neo-colonialism, and the vicious over-reaction by Protestants that gave fertile ground to an organisation, which had in real terms died with the end of the Border Campaign over a decade before. Now they, and we, must live with it, regardless of our personal views on the merits of any one of their current claims.

What is most interesting from our point of view is the split between the Provisionals and the Officials, especially since the later no longer exists. We note this cautiously and mean by it that they no longer exist in the sense of having an agenda directly concerned with the removal of partition. Men, willing and able to use violence for political ends, are capable of a complete change of heart, nonetheless they are unlikely to do so, and we may assume that the tendency still exists in its offspring, currently the Workers Party and the Democratic Left section of the Labour Party. Tactical considerations, however, may well keep it in the background. The Provisionals, we may assume, have lost most of the worst of their radical Marxist element, though certainly not all of it. This is important in understanding an organisation, which we will have to deal with one way or another. The motivation of the rank and file member of that organisation is every bit as significant as any stance taken by the leadership. It is reasonably safe to presume, since the propaganda for recruitment centres on the need to end the occupation and partition of the North by Britain rather than Socialist rhetoric, that this is the motivation of the vast majority of the members. This must be true too of Sinn Féin who, although officially committed to a socialist republic in the thirty two counties, do not play this up in propaganda terms and, consequently, we may assume that support for them is not necessarily support for Socialism.

The difficulty in understanding organisations formed on such issues as partition is, precisely, that having so been formed, the rank and file membership are open to being controlled by elements which have another agenda, but are willing to work within a framework which holds up the cherished ideal. Since the average Sinn Féin member is concerned primarily with the idea that the occupation is the primary source of all problems, he or she has not given much thought at all to other political questions. He or she may very well have a very different idea on exactly what kind of a United Ireland he/she believes in, and wants to see, than elements organised within the Party with a specific agenda to push for Socialist, Feminist, or other unnatural principles. The latter

will tend to succeed in having what they are most determined upon adopted, by virtue of the indifference of the majority to any other question than partition.

It cannot be overstated how crucial a point this is when persons coming from a revolutionary nationalist tradition look at issues arising from the Northern question. We may by recognising the Socialist character of much of Sinn Fein's propaganda be led to disown people who are very much closer to ourselves politically than might first appear obvious. Certainly, for example, although Sinn Fein is officially committed to limited abortion, the leadership has sought at all times to restrain its more radical pro-abortionist element, obviously in acknowledgement that very many others in the party are wholly opposed and have settled, therefore, on a compromise. This compromise is not one which would hold if the Party were actually to be called upon to take a stance on this issue, which might in real terms affect the law on abortion either North or South. Just how crucial this factor may be will not be apparent until an Irish government seriously sets about tackling the problem of Northern Ireland in a determined way. This has not heretofore happened, nor indeed is it imminent.

As for Constitutionalism, great play is made of the absence of mandate by the IRA, even from the Catholic community. This is hardly credible to the men and women who have witnessed so many changes of the democratic goalposts even in their own lifetimes. They are, no doubt, firmly convinced of the Bellocian adage that if voting could change anything it would be banned. For republicans to be told that the majority in the North wish to maintain the Union is not really serious. The Six County state was an artificial creation designed to create a perpetual majority for the Union, and as such cannot have the credibility of democracy at all. A large Catholic minority was thrown in and left to the hard sympathies of their erstwhile oppressors to be taunted daily with their subjugation, while leaving them abandoned by the only meaningful majority - that of Ireland as a whole. They are correct in this. We would be talking today about the problem of the five, the four or even the three counties if that was what had been required to maintain an enclave of British occupation in the *Government of Ireland Act*, where Protestants could feel secure in their majority. Such talk of democracy is worthless, and insulting to intelligent people. If the Unionists have any claim to be taken seriously, it is not a democratic one, but rather the question of a community of shared history and culture, which does not want to be ruled by what they regard as a foreign nation. That succinctly is the equally valid claim of Republicanism.

Among the so-called respectable nationalists, that is the S.D.L.P., who do attract a higher percentage of the poll from the Catholic community, the path of violence is always to be avoided on principle. Just how much the credibility of this party is bound up with the violent campaign waged by the IRA is, however, a subject rarely examined. Prior to the current troubles, the current of opinion represented by this Party was to be found in the nationalist party. No one much cared, it has to be admitted, what they said about anything. The Unionists waved their majority position in the face of all arguments concerning basic justice. They formed constituency boundaries, for both local government and Stormount elections, which left them with even fewer representatives than their numbers would have merited. Now, with the campaign some thirty years old, everyone is seen to be willing to talk to the S.D.L.P. Why?

Quite simply, IRA violence pushed the issues of minority rights onto the agenda in a way that could not be ignored. Unionists, as well as the British and Irish governments, had to address them with someone. Since respectable people could not be seen to be talking to the spokesmen of the "*men of violence*", they settled on talking to the S.D.L.P., who being "nice" people like themselves, might be calculated to take the full heat of support away from "wilder" republicans. That still leaves the S.D.L.P. without a role, other than as a quieter group to deal with. What we mean is that without the need to compromise with Catholics, in order to draw support away from the IRA, they would in all probability still have no role whatever, and continue talking to themselves with no one seriously listening.

All of which reminds us of the outrageous behaviour of both governments through the long years after partition. The Irish government, in particular, bears considerable responsibility for the eruption of violence, which their ignorance of Northern injustices made inevitable. Pious platitudes about peace and the occasional laying of the Green card, especially by Fianna Fail - the Republican Party, during Southern General Elections bears all the hallmarks of the same hypocrisy which is the daily diet of Southerners under all governments since independence. All parties in the South are officially committed to the re-integration of the Six Counties into the Republic, and have made more or less noise about this from the signing of the treaty onwards. What is tragically ironic is that the man most commonly labelled traitor by those arm-chair republicans, Michael Collins, may well be remembered as being alone in serious commitment to the idea as a practical endeavour. Certainly, Eammon De Valera cannot lay any claim to much more than irritating noise in this regard.

One obvious notion stands out, that any political party committed to a thirty two county state would have to be organised on a thirty two county basis. Or are we to believe that in fighting out general elections over every seat in every constituency in the twenty six, that both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael would be happy to welcome T.D.s into Dail Eireann from other parties in the Six Counties which elected them unopposed? On the other hand, if one foresaw no real prospect of the re-unification of the island, and was not in fact really supportive of the idea at all, there seems no point in organising for election in that corner of the country whence no T.D. would ever come to affect what you were really interested in - that is, maintaining power in the Southern State. The absence of the Southern parties from Northern Ireland is clear proof that talk of Republicanism is all hot air, and another example of "standing idly by". Even the British Conservative Party is organised in the North, albeit rather badly.

So the many governments, which have come and gone in the Republic, were, in this as in so many instances, lying. It calls into question any position they take on the North, and makes one wonder what exactly they really think about the problem, if anything at all. They trot out the occasional Northern politician, like John Hume, to tell us how very badly the Unionists would regard the constitutional protection of the right to life of our children, or the right to life-long marriage, and in that sense the North has been useful as a battering ram against traditional values. While no sensible person could possibly believe that government-sponsored murder of children could make the Republic a more attractive prospect for the Unionists, in the heated context

of referenda campaigns, it has had its momentary effects. This issue alone may have been enough to swing the final tally in the Divorce debate. The morality of the parties, which abandoned Northern Catholics to perpetual subjugation and violence after the foundation of the Civil Rights Movement, lecturing the Irish people on the sensibilities of the Unionists is really beneath contempt. Though not quite as contemptible but worrying, nonetheless, is the question of the political acumen of any government which actually might have believed one word of it

Are they really that much out of touch with the thinking of Northern Protestants that they believe that all we need do is show them how pluralistically stupid we are, and all will be well? A nation of happy families once again? There are some on the secularist Left, who believe this, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. A restatement then of a fact is required. The Northern Protestant does not want to live in a non-Protestant State. He is, as such, uninterested in whether that state is a Catholic one, a secular one, or indeed a Hindu or Muslim one. A Protestant State for a Protestant People is what Ian Paisley said, what he meant and behind him, in the long run, would lie the bulk of Protestant opinion. Even more salient is the Protestant willingness to fight if and when it came down to it. All else is like Fianna Fail Republicanism - hot air and political cowardice.

It is a damn sight easier to engage the mind on the secularist agenda in the South, which is supposed to alter all things for the better, than to address the problems seriously arising from the Northern issue, both in terms of the violence, which it has provoked, and in the solutions it requires. That is what statesmen would concern themselves with, and we haven't had any in Ireland since Collins. No Irish government of any party has carried with it any credibility, either with Nationalists or Unionists, and for the most part their speeches have been ignored, rightly, as unreliable.

What is clear to persons involved on either side of the actual divide is that whatever the propaganda output, which varies depending on whether they are formulating policy for government or merely shouting from the opposition side, all parties represented in Dail Eireann are basically committed to is sounding like the voice of reason, while hoping the problem throws up a solution which requires nothing of them. In this regard, ritual condemnation of terrorist activities, and in support of an end to violence, seems safe enough ground on which to pronounce endlessly. Yet anything resembling an opinion on what shape they would like to see the future of Northern Ireland take is to be avoided like the plague. What is most striking here is, of course, that the end to violence would be the simplest way in which to allow the issue to depart from the national agenda without very much fuss. This is the return of the idea which gives the S.D.L.P. its standing. While the sympathies of Southern politicians are not much with the Unionists, who they cannot really understand because they are people who actually believe something, there is a way in which they might sound concerned in a way which is most comfortable to them; namely to support the futile efforts of people, like John Hume, who regularly propose programmes of an entirely unworkable nature, but which have an air of reasonability to people not acquainted with the facts. Just as with the Unionists, the *status quo* is unsatisfactory, but at least it is a situation with which they can live.

It is equally clear is that no initiative will ever come from the Dublin Establishment, which is unlikely to break through the contradictions inherent in the Northern problem. They are happy enough to avoid being the source of solutions, or of aggravating the situation through actually doing something. In short, there is no end to their willingness to "*stand idly by*".

In fairness, however, it should be noted that, whereas the sins of the Irish government have been primarily of omission, the British government has been guilty of the most enormous crimes of commission. Historically, they are, of course, the source of the problem in that the Plantations were an error of great importance. It is surely obvious the greatest responsibility for finding a solution to any given problem must lie with the instigators or their heirs. We return to the obvious point that it is useless to speak of majorities, or of the right to self determination, when the majority in question was artificially created by the importation of a majority, and the dispossession of the indigenous people. The creation of an arbitrary partition, to maintain an enclave where self determination might be claimed, is unacceptable. Such a logic would justify the conquest of any nation at any time if the invader were to move enough of his own population into the occupied area. It is, incidentally, a practice, common in the past, condemned by the United Nations Charter, and of which Britain is a signator. It is not, in any meaningful way, different from the expressed purpose of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia.

None of this can have any real meaning for British politicians, or the Establishment they represent. Rather it would appear far more likely that internal political pressures in Britain, of an essentially neo-colonialist nature, are more pressing. It is certainly true that many MPs on the Right of the Tory Party, who *might* well be our allies on questions such as European integration, are on the issue of the North deeply committed to the nostalgia for Empire. This is really quite poignant in its own way, and we can hardly guess how we would feel to see an imperial monolith, covering nearly one quarter of the globe, collapse in ignominy not only of defeat but of general disgust as well, in the space of less than a generation. It is perfectly natural that, in the circumstances, feelings should continue to run high, and to some extent holding on in Northern Ireland has been a justification of the Empire itself. No less than the Unionists in the North, the Unionists on the mainland are vaguely, if unconsciously, aware of injustices done and, as such, the pull out of Northern Ireland would mark a recognition and confession. For many British nationalists that is as yet unthinkable.

Of course, the complications in the post-war period of the Cold War, and the identification of the IRA with the Left, through both the propaganda of Sinn Fein, and the various direct contacts of the Provisionals with certain governments, gave credence to the notion that an ideological struggle was being carried out, and that behind the Republican volunteer was the Soviet Union's influence. No significant study of this question has ever been undertaken, so the idea lived as a general feeling of trepidation and paranoia; something intangible, yet felt to be present. For example, while Britain used its influence on Western Governments to close all avenues of advance to republicans, it begs the question: *to what extent were the IRA being pushed into the leftist camp, and to what extent they would have belonged there by nature?*

Certainly, it will be agreed that the only doors open to them, internationally, were the doors of those powers outside British influence. It might be worth asking to what extent this contributed to the growing influence of socialist elements within Sinn Féin, who could reasonably claim, as a result, that this ideology alone opened the way to funding and training facilities otherwise beyond reach.

The point has surely been reached, however, where no British government can seriously claim a substantial strategic interest in maintaining the *status quo* in Northern Ireland. The British people are far from sharing the Unionists view that the North is integrally a part of the United Kingdom. The man in the street sees the Unionist as being Irish. It may be an opinion poorly founded, but it is widely believed nonetheless. The Unionist, whatever else he might believe, ought not to believe that the British government is forever committed to his cause. No British soldier feels at heart that he is defending British territory, so he has to be convinced that he is helping to defeat the terrorist agenda. At no time in the history of the world has such an argument kept a standing army in place in the long term, and the North will be no different.

As matters stand, the conflict in the North remains a situation more or less under control. The claims of the IRA that they are making the province ungovernable have simply not materialised, and are unlikely to do so. That said, the province *is* a high security zone in a state of undeclared martial law. It is an enormous burden for the British taxpayer, in terms of policing and soldiering. Attempts to quell the conflict by an influx of capital, aimed at raising standards of living, have not proven successful as a rule. The Troubles have ensured that most of this money goes on filling out the gaps that private capital will not take up. As such, it has the character of a bottomless pit.

The British are being hoisted on their own petard, because having justified their presence in the North on the narrow principle of Six County self determination at a time when it suited their interests, they now find themselves committed to that principle, however meaningless, in the present context. With no strategic interest, they are left with their majority nonetheless. No government would have the nerve to cut and run with the consequences laid firmly at their door. Why this should be so very important is obvious, for it must be that any British government would look favourably on any 'honourable' opportunity to withdraw from what has become a no-win quagmire. The matter hinges on a proposal of how this may best be done - satisfying both public opinion that Justice has been done, while serving the particular interests at the same time, which have maintained the British presence.

Heretofore, a just solution has repeatedly eluded any and all attempts, but this is because of the fixity of the positions taken. They are clearly not reconcilable. It must appear obvious that, far from requiring an agreed solution, what Northern Ireland needs is the *right solution*, regardless of what the various players might think of it. One of the most destructive clichés to enter public discussion of the North is that there can be no imposed solution. This is to surrender the power of initiative from the powers which, in the last analysis, will bear responsibility. To surrender that initiative to even the tiniest fraction, which holds however implausible a position, is to neutralise power politics.

Given the players and the attitudes outlined above, nothing is possible. There

is almost no point of conjunction. It is a mistake to believe that Unionism is monolithic in its attitudes on anything other than the principle of avoiding re-unification. In the event that they were to be asked to formulate their ideas in a positive way, we might well find it would break-up into a variety of positions, ranging from total integration, through a return to Stormount, to the idea of an independent Ulster, which is very popular in some circles. It is a mistake too to imagine Republicanism as a monolith, since it contains within itself the Socialist International element, as well as the more predominant strain of traditionalist Nationalism. Within the context of stand-offs against implacable opponents, it may well be that such coalitions hold together, but the dynamics of real progress would prove them fragile.

There is no factoring in of a significant change of view by any of the parties, which might alter dramatically previously clear and unarguable assumptions. For the Southerner, interested in real solutions, that impetus for change can only come from an Irish government. This is to say, we can only deal with changes which we ourselves can effect, and look at the prospects that those changes on our part might effect. As with so many matters dealt with in this book, our approach must be radically different, and founded upon a clear understanding of the real situation. We must decide our priorities, and we must proceed to achieve them by the actual means at our disposal.

The Southern elector can only effect change in the position taken by the Dublin government, since it is here alone that he exercises some influence. If it seems that the primary priority must be the end of violence, and the return to the rule of law in that province, then we must give thought only to that. All-encompassing justice is not, nor has it ever been possible. There is no way in which we can do adequate justice to the persecuted and disenfranchised of previous generations, without first being willing to assume the enormous responsibility which that would entail in the present. No serious person is willing to assume such a responsibility, since it would need to unfold in a huge burst of violence driving out the Unionist population, or their ruthless subjugation by means which are not thinkable in our time. Among the wider elements of Republicanism, it might well be easier to maintain a burning hatred, born of past grievances, and continue a war of attrition that has no foreseeable end. However, this is hardly taken seriously, even by the republican leadership, so it is one thing that may reasonably be discounted.

Thus, we are talking about addressing current grievances. The fact that a substantial Unionist population exists means that it must be dealt with. If the priority is peace with a semblance of justice, they must be dealt with in manner which is substantially acceptable to them in the long run. This is where the issue of an imposed solution arises. It is not reasonable to expect any party to the current conflict to abandon ground currently held without resistance. As such, some resistance may be anticipated and should be planned for. However, it is not for this reason impossible. So long as the imposed solution has the result of creating an atmosphere in which the most obstinate cannot maintain their support, then their opinion in the short run may be discounted. The obstinate Unionists, drawing as they do their support from the fear that all change is directed to an inevitable re-unification with the Republic, can only be countered by a programme which clearly does not involve this. The obstinate

Republicans, drawing their support from the daily injustices of the Northern system, can only be countered by means which remove those injustices from the lives of ordinary folk. In this regard, it should be remembered that the average person is not motivated by ideology. He/she conducts their daily lives and the prospects for the future on very basic concerns. Political parties, on the other hand, may well take entrenched positions on the issues, in the full knowledge that such positions make progress impossible and keeps their support alive.

We cannot deal effectively with people committed by doctrine to a Thirty-Two County Republic, and with people committed by doctrine to maintaining the Union and still seriously expect a solution. We can, however, take the initiative on a solution which, though opposed vigorously by many, will in the long run provide for ordinary people the means by which they can live in some sense of security and happiness. If that were to be our goal, we could remove the pool of support from which more dangerous ideologues recruit and continue campaigns of violence and/or obstinacy.

Thus, we encounter a new notion in Northern affairs, or rather an idea which has remained practically dormant for more than seven decades, but which offers a real possibility of moving forward. That is re-partition. The re-drawing of the boundaries of the Six County statelet, on the basis of some four or even three and a half county basis, offers an opening in the current impasse, which is the only solution. Of course, we do not want to do this. Of course, as Irish nationalists, we realise that such a move would serve to perpetuate partitionism. Of course, for mainstream Unionism it means the surrender of a good deal of the territory, which currently constitutes the Northern statelet, and may well be viewed as the surrender of a great deal. The political support for the idea will, in the immediate term, be next to non-existent. No Northern party will support it and probably no public figure of any importance, but then this is not where the substance of the idea lies.

If we say that the motivation for the IRA campaign of violence lies in the daily injustices inherent in the Northern state, and that support for that campaign comes primarily from people who have had personal experience of this, then surely the only meaningful way to undermine that support is to remove the means by which such grievances are fed. Those means are primarily the presence of British troops, and their behaviour, in concert with the RUC, in imposing British law on areas and people which do not accept such laws. If the majority of such resisters were to be incorporated into the Republic, ground support for a violent policy must inevitably evaporate, since its motivation for most is not ideological so much as bitter daily experiences.

If we say that the motivation for Unionist intransigence, and their paramilitary activity, is motivated by the fear of re-unification, then the only means to counteract that is by the imposition of a solution which forestalls the possibility of such a forced re-unification. To be sure the immediate reaction will be of distrust, most especially since they will have been excluded from negotiations because of their likely refusal of any such re-partition. However, in the longer term, the plausibility of paranoia will wane in the face of facts, and the Protestant people secure, not by virtue of majority within a statelet, but by virtue of universality cannot be fertile ground for the organisation of violent campaigns.

A significant ground for objection to the re-partition idea lies, not with the opposition of Northern parties which are now quite used to imposed solutions, but

with the unwillingness of the British Government to accept such a solution without the agreement of those parties. This is certainly a grave possibility, though by no means a certainty. It may be possible to convince the British government of the good sense of such a proposal, particularly insofar as it allows it to withdraw from a very expensive situation in which, by their own admission, they have no strategic interest.

If that co-operation were forthcoming the process, by which re-partition might be negotiated and enacted, would be relatively simple. The great advantage of this plan is that such co-operation is, of itself, not a necessity, and the process may be effected without the support of any recognised party, other than that the initiative be taken by the Irish government. For much of the area which we are talking about is almost completely Catholic (not simply a matter of crude simple majority) and located near the current border. The difficulties posed by opposition from all sides can then be overcome, though they admittedly do provide many obstacles. The Irish government can, however, begin the process of assuming those responsibilities for Ireland, which they have heretofore reneged upon. They can present all of the factions with a *fait accompli*.

Within the border areas of which we speak, the process of gradually eliminating the British presence must begin with the appropriation of those governmental functions which can be undertaken even within the framework of British law. There is nothing, for example, to prevent the establishment of "private" schools on both primary and secondary level, which could be financed entirely by the Irish government, in the same way as public schools are maintained in the South. Since these areas are primarily nationalist, it seems obvious that the people in those areas would welcome the liberation from the necessity to attend British-funded schools. There would be no difficulty in providing for the recognition of examination results according to the Republic, i.e. Junior Cert, Leaving Cert etc. The establishment of hospital and other health facilities within these designated areas also poses no substantial problems, while the extension of the right to avail of medical card services within these health facility structures is simple enough. The payment of Social Welfare to those persons, who would be entitled to such payments in the Republic, providing they had satisfied the authorities that they were not in receipt of similar benefits under the United Kingdom system, would follow. As such the withering of the British State structure in these areas would make their maintenance a useless endeavour. It would be the establishment of almost an entire parallel State, working within the structure of British law, but placing the *de facto* government of these territories in the hands of the Republic. It would make it increasingly difficult for Britain to maintain the *status quo* on a *de jure* basis, since the principle of self determination would be made effective by the success of the project thus undertaken.

It might well be possible to set up a parallel police and court structure within the disputed areas, much as was done in the period by Republicans leading up to the founding of the Irish Free State. Those who note the similarities with the abortive Free Derry campaign are not essentially off the mark. The crucial difference however is the active and insistent involvement of the Irish Government, willing and determined to follow the programme through completely.

The important thing is to win back the trust of the nationalist people in the Irish government, and in its determination to speak for and defend their interests at all

times. As Irish citizens, both in fact and by heart, these people are our ultimate concern and nothing by way of bargaining should dissuade us from recognising and vindicating that role on their behalf. This is clearly the most effective way of dealing with the campaign of violence on the Republican side, since it addresses most forcefully the genuine grievances which up until now have been meaningfully addressed only by Sinn Fein.

Those in Sinn Fein, who are really serious about dealing with these matters and not in abusing them for other less acceptable motives, must surely recognise the most enormous change in direction which the establishment of the parallel structures would represent. As such, an independent command for republican paramilitaries, with widespread community support, cannot long be maintained, when it is clearly the Dublin government, which could most effectively furnish the means by which the IRA's promise to render the province ungovernable, might be realised - at least in those areas which are overwhelmingly nationalist. There is no question here of negotiating with, or coming to any arrangement with, the leadership of the IRA, or of granting them an influential role. It is a matter of addressing the genuine grievances of those people, who currently feel compelled to support them for lack of realistic alternative. It is a matter of bringing those people on side as individuals, under the rule of law, in the aim of building an effective counter power to British and Unionist control of the nationalist areas of the province. It is a matter of allowing nationalists to opt-out of British rule in large part, until such time as the British government is forced to accept the *de facto* situation, and cede those areas directly to the Republic.

A corollary to such an arrangement must inevitably be the voluntary movement of peoples across the new borders, so as to solidify support for the arrangements created on either side. Here and only here do the real negotiations with Unionist opinion begin. It will appear obvious at this stage that the maintenance of the Six County state will be impossible for the Unionists, even with the full support of the British government. Practical people will need to get down to the practical implication of the new situation. What is on offer for them is something not previously imaginable and presently, perhaps not acceptable. It is independence and the guarantee of a completely Protestant State in the remaining portion of the province. It is already obvious to far thinking Unionists that the Six County state, justified on majoritarianism, is unsustainable as the demographic climb in the Catholic/Protestant divide makes plain. In the long run, dependence upon this principle makes re-integration with the Republic inevitable. It will be plain that without agreement on re-partition this is precisely where the political process is leading.

The question for us in the Republic is whether we would wish such an outcome were it possible. Given the practical implications involved, the Irish people are not likely to welcome what comes inescapably with such a re-integration. Firstly, the abandonment by Unionists of the claim to Union, based on majority rule, will be followed by the emergence of a Protestant nationalism, signs of which are already in evidence. That nationalism will be re-inforced just as vigorously by the use of violence, which is currently somewhat muted on their side only, because other options are available. The republican, who rejects re-partition, must be ready for the consequences,

the most crucial of which will be the necessity to suppress by force this new form of nationalist sentiment. It will require a tremendous amount of force, likely to be much greater than that required currently to suppress Catholic nationalism. With its back to the wall, Unionism is likely to react as a national force and, in all probability, we will find ourselves not with a security problem, but with a bloody civil war on a scale we have not ever seen in Ireland.

Even in victory, at the potential cost of thousands of lives, the resentment which this will spawn will reverberate through as many generations as there are generations of Northern Protestants on this island.

It hardly needs to be said that such a prospect is not one for which the Irish people have any heart at all and, though it can be provoked by obstinacy or bigotry on both sides, it can as well be avoided by the simple recognition of the facts of our situation, which is the recognition of the right of Ulster Unionists to self determination based on their right as a nation. Nothing else will bring lasting peace to this island. Those who pretend otherwise are either lying or hopelessly deluded.

Re-partition is inevitable in one form or another. The only real question at issue is whether it comes as a result of negotiation and agreement, or comes at the price of blood and death. One may be forgiven for favouring the former.

For those of us interested in creating a Catholic Republic, there can be no doubt that a Thirty Two County Republic, containing by force a stubborn Protestant minority, is not desirable, even if it might be achieved at a lesser cost. So much of what we believe in, and what this nation so clearly needs, would be rendered impossible. That much is obvious from what is currently idle talk about pluralism. In our own time, pluralism is used as a code word for secularism, destructive of all Christian values, Catholic or Protestant. In a Republic, with a large Protestant population, some form of Christian pluralism would be necessary whatever one thought of it. While agreement might well be possible with a conservative minded North on, for example, a complete ban on abortion, what would happen in respect of the need to re-introduce the ban on divorce? This is but the beginning of the problems. If the State is to be imbued with the necessary religious ethos, then it must be the ethos of the overwhelming number to work in practice. That can only mean a Catholic ethos for a Catholic people. Without indulging too deeply in tautology, a Catholic State for a Catholic People requires, firstly, a Catholic people, or a greater degree of tyranny than any of us would in fact find acceptable.

Of course, there is the current peace process. While no sane person would deliberately seek the demise of the process, a little reality ought to temper the wild optimism that the talks are taking place at all. To be sure, everyone supports a constructive outcome to the process, which leads to lasting peace on this island. To date, however, no person has shown us how this can be so. In all the various discussions that take place, not one has any real meaning until such time as they address the central constitutional question: the status of the Six Counties within the United Kingdom. There is the Gordian knot. *The Unionists will stick to the principle of the Union, and the Republicans stick to the principle of the Republic.* They must do so. No idle wish can cast away their *raison d'être*. Perhaps this is a consequence of the

way in which Britain has sought to rule the counties since the Treaty. By limiting the powers of self government within the province, they have reduced all political issues in the North essentially to this one: the Union or not.

If this analysis appears to pre-empt the possibilities offered by the process, which is itself unprecedented, then let's look at those possibilities in the best possible light. Let us suppose that the talks process leads not only the S.D.L.P., but Sinn Fein to accept in principle that the Union shall remain while the majority wish it. Does that mean that those who have supported these parties precisely because they have opposed the Union will go along with it quietly? Or isn't it more likely that the political support, which exists for resistance, will simply transfer itself to other groups more steadfast in defence of the Republican idea? The grievances will remain. The circumstances, giving rise to the grievances, will remain. It is naive to suppose in this case that the resistance will dissipate. Remember, those grievances are founded fundamentally on a kind of "cultural anger", which has nothing whatever to do with the South as such, and cannot be swept away with idle ideas of cross border structures and so forth - even supposing agreement on them could be reached with the Unionist representatives.

Conversely, let us suppose that the main Unionist parties, including the D.U.P., could be persuaded to relinquish the principle of the Union, in favour of the Republic, or federation or whatever. Does the signature of Ian Paisley on a document secure the acquiescence of his political support? Isn't it more realistic to suppose that the fears and basic separateness of that community would express itself through some other form? Paramilitary groups are relatively easy to form when the will exists. This is why decommissioning is a nonsense issue. It is the will to use violence which matters. The means will always be found. The Unionists have no reason to believe that time is on their side, as Republicans might have done when the Treaty was signed. They know their backs are to the wall, and whether or not Ulster will be right is an idle question, when it is certain that Ulster will fight.

More likely than either of these scenarios is that the process will itself fail, and the parties will represent their communities with the increased tenacity born of the fears which the process itself raises. The Sinn Fein leadership will have that leadership wrested from them, if the principle of the Republic is debated seriously, either directly from within the party, or by the rise of Republican Sinn Fein (or something like it) as a force. Ian Paisley's star will fade quickly, if he is party to any serious discussion of the principle of the Union, to be replaced by a more worthy representative. It is neither here nor there that we would wish something else.

That the people of Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant, are weary of war is true enough. For now, they are willing, at least in principle, to contemplate any alternative arrangement that appears to bring peace closer. As such, the results of the referenda are mistaken for a much more meaningful departure from their historical context than they really are. This is not the first time that a community in Northern Ireland resolved to make the best of things, however dreadful that might be, and in doing so there was a peace of sorts. Following the failure of the Border Campaign, an uneasy peace settled and was maintained principally by fear of war. Naturally, such a situation was not sustainable. Firstly, the fundamental problems had not even been

addressed by the military failure of that campaign, never mind solved. A generation was to arrive, which feared the daily grind of injustice more than it feared war and thirty years of violence. The Good Friday Agreement has addressed *some* of the structural problems of Northern Ireland, and thus raises limited hopes for a limited peace. Since, however, it has been beyond the participants to face the core problem, it has been equally beyond them to find a lasting solution. ***A generation will arise for whom Justice means more than Peace.***

As a consequence, the structures put in place by the Agreement are more dangerous than hopeful. They cannot work, but they can raise expectations, the cruel disappointment of which will likely usher in a new era of cynicism. The consequences Ireland may well lament in blood.

No-one is against a peace process and, even suggesting what ought to be obvious, is guaranteed to draw the ire of many. This is not because people can see a way beyond these problems, only that an unresolved process is one upon which people can project their own political fantasy. At this moment, it is yet possible for the Unionists to believe that by some miracle the new arrangement will secure the Union; or Republicans can project the outcome in their mind's eye as a Republic; or the pacifists can imagine a vague and undefined peace. It will not last. It cannot last. *That is how it has been, how it is, and how it will be.*



A Country Of Our Own

The General Election of 1997 saw the emergence of immigration as a national issue taking everyone by surprise. Naturally, it took the opponents of immigration by surprise insofar as the absence of public discussion on any question gives rise to the feeling that one is practically alone in caring at all, one way or another. In this instance, the absence of debate tends to fuel the notion that a consensus exists, and that the consensus is in favour. This would be true if you took a poll of NUJ members, but rather less likely amongst the general public.

It clearly took the supporters of immigration by surprise as well, though it should not have, since it has been the most heated controversy in every European country for years. It has given rise to the wildest pronouncements about the re-emergence of "Fascism", simply because political organisations have been formed primarily to oppose immigration and support repatriation. That such parties are not Fascist, we can guess at simply by how widely and wildly the term has been used in Ireland. This is not the point, however. The point is that it has prompted the most outrageous panic in liberal circles in those countries apt to see swastikas everywhere - even in such unlikely places as John Major's late and unlamented government. Our Liberals were too busy flinging this term of abuse at the so-called "Moral Majority" and the Church, and never thought that people would defend their homeland as well as their children.

To a large extent, they are the authors of their own demise. They trusted the boundless generosity and stupidity of the Irish people to extend endlessly, and it is the liberals who raised the issue in the first instance. A few years ago, after much clandestine lobbying, organisations like Amnesty International and the so-called "Refugee Council", sought and succeeded in getting the government to pass the *Refugees Act*, which provided for the most ridiculous procedures to be applied to immigrants to this country, claiming to be fleeing from persecution and in their home countries. It would have been better named the "*Come Hither Act*", for in effect it meant that deporting claimants would be a long, expensive and embarrassing task, likely to end in failure, regardless of the merits of the case.

This was not enough for the liberals. They were no longer happy with achieving a fact. Now, they were telling us that the Act was not being implemented promptly enough. This was true only to the extent that, whatever one's view of the Act, it was an interminably long time in implementation. What the liberals may have failed to realise was that this delay was facilitating their core aim of increasing immigration since, as a rule, nothing was being done with the immigrants at all. They were allowed quite illegally to remain in receipt of Social Welfare payments and other benefits, which the taxpayer might expect only to be paid to his fellow Irish.

Not good enough however and the influential fringe involved in immigration assistance availed of their media contacts to let out loud hollerings about "legal limbo"

and other such nonsense to the degree that one had the feeling that the so-called refugees were being persecuted more here than they had been in the countries of their alleged suffering. Meanwhile, immigrants were pouring in, clearly undaunted by the prospects of legal limbos. Their increasing presence became evident to everyone, although for obvious reasons this was particularly true in Dublin and the other major urban centres.

The Irish are a patient people. They have had to be, but it really was too much to be lectured daily on the "uncivilised" treatment of refugees, while they were making every personal effort to accommodate. Unless the same immigrants spent all day walking the streets, just so as to be seen, it was clear that the figures given out by Amnesty International and others were absurd. Any fool knew that there were, and are, many more than we were being told about.

Although Nationalist activists often lament the gullibility of the public in swallowing the media's version of any story, people can on some things observe the facts for themselves. You cannot fool all of the people, all of the time. This case was the case with "refugees". If their advocates were lying about numbers, then a rat could be smelled. Thus, it is that Amnesty International and the Refugee Council may be credited with ringing the first alarm bells concerning immigration into Ireland.

The clash of cultures, which is just interesting in tourists and merely peculiar in individual immigrants, became pronounced as the numbers increased. Certain of the least palatable aspects of the Muslim religion - the ritual slaughter of animals in a cruel fashion - made their first noticeable appearance in Ireland, and the witnesses were not impressed by the cosmopolitan idea of it at all. Immigrants began to congregate in gangs, which if not always or even usually dangerous, exerted a kind of quiet menace, which was disturbing to people who had never thought about them before. Naturally, the first myth about immigrants collapsed quickly - namely, that they integrate into society in a mainly contributory fashion. Ask any Irish person, who was not well travelled ten years ago, and odds are he/she would have believed this. Now he/she is beginning to realise that integration is not the intention, or the result. The immigrant is simply here.

Hardly any mention of this phenomena was to be seen in the mainstream media though, and no-one, Left or Right, took much notice of what was afterwards revealed to be a growing groundswell of opinion. So little notice, in fact, the liberals were not sufficiently on guard to give our public representatives the nod on the politically correct manner in which they were to approach the question. Thus, when the canvassers at the General Election found the previously silent electorate silent no more, some rather naive candidates responded to their constituents uncharacteristically. They sought to represent their views.

A particular example of this was Fianna Fail's, Liam Lawlor, who found himself rapidly in the eye of a storm. Naturally, he has since recanted and, though he has several times been interviewed to represent the 'restrictive' view on immigration, he has been fulsome in his grovelling at the mere mention of refugees. Professor Pavlov's theories remain undisputed.

The mistake was compounded by granting some considerable airtime to an anti-immigration candidate in Cork, Aine ni Coineall, who is a surprisingly articulate spokeswoman. It gave her, as a consequence, the kind of national recognition to form

the *Immigration Control Platform*. While it is still too early to make a judgement on this organisation, its very existence is bound to raise the temperature on this issue.

We should not, however, expect early mistakes to be a portent to the future. Remember that those in favour of large scale immigration have the co-ordinating power of E.U. institutions, as well as many friends in the media. They are very similar to the pro-abortionists, which is not surprising, since they are largely the same people. All the established rules of combat will be employed and quickly against the new group, or similar ones if they are formed. The Irish people remain woefully ignorant of the real issues at the heart of the immigration debate. This means that they are fair game for atrocity propaganda, as well as spurious historical analogies.

What is important, however, is that it has emerged as a talking point before it is too late, unlike in Britain and elsewhere in Europe where it has already resulted in much harm. There it will be a terrible mess to sort out, even if a serious political will to do so becomes evident.

It is certainly no exaggeration to suggest that immigration will emerge in the coming years as a parallel to the so-called moral debates. The other side will be largely made up and represented by the same individuals and groups, which are currently pro-abortion and EU federalist. On the Irish nationalist side, however, the question is still undetermined.

Certain Catholic Bishops who, though embarrassed into sort-of supporting the right to life of the unborn child by the dogmas of the Faith, lay pressure and the pronouncements of the Pope, have already felt free to nail their colours to the Liberal mast on this question. For this, they will receive their customary pat on the head. The loudest in support of immigrants "rights" can be guaranteed to be the quietest on the threatening abortion holocaust. This is a pointer to how often the phrase "un-Christian" will be abused in this debate as in others. Whether anyone is listening to the Bishops anymore is something else.

For the rest of us, one thing is certain. It will not be possible to have no opinion at all. Just like abortion, we will each of us by malice, mere acquiescence or courage determine our own position if not the outcome. It is important then that some of the more outrageous notions be cleared up in our own minds first.

Much has been made of the "unique" history of Ireland, by which we are supposed to feel a self-sacrificing solidarity with every person in the world, who does not wish to live where he lives now. It may surprise the uninformed to know that every country in Western Europe has its own unique history, by which they are supposed to feel the same. It might make a suspicious person think he was being had and, of course, he would be right.

In Britain, for example, their unique tale is of Empire. Thus, the suffering, both real and otherwise, carried around the world by their forebears is meant to render self-evident the moral imperative to open their doors to that world now in whatever numbers. The British Empire's history is not always the most laudatory, when it came to subjecting other peoples to the Crown and - though some of the horror stories are clearly made up - it would be the stout hearted indeed who would seek to defend their record in its entirety. Yet we might at least take a look where that weight was felt the heaviest, and the suffering the greatest. In particular, we might look where there is a legacy carried down to the present day.

It is not in most of Africa where the colonies, once freed from Crown rule, were in theory allowed to pursue their own national life. We note, of course, the restrictions of International Finance, for which the British may not be blamed a half century on. Those nations have the freedom to achieve freedom, and their subjugation to foreigners is a matter of internal corruption by the leaders, who assumed control. It is worth noting that most of the leaders were installed against the wishes of the British Government. Westminster may be blamed for many things, even perhaps for creating the atmosphere for backlash, but they didn't impose Marxist-Leninist governments in Africa. The Soviets, in collusion with the more vicious elements within these countries, did that.

Even the atrocity stories, which are in any case hard to verify, were necessarily rare here, if only because there weren't enough British to carry them out. As a result of their numbers, administration was generally carried out through the tribal system, leaving the daily life of the African relatively unaffected.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand, however, are another matter. The average Irishman isn't likely to think of such places, when contemplating the outrages of British colonialism. Why? Only because almost no one remains of the indigenous population to maintain the memory or to complain. Why? Because these were the places of immigration! These are the places to which the British moved in large numbers. Since every schoolchild knows that two objects cannot occupy the same space, the North American Indian, the Aborigine and the Maori among others had to make space for the new immigrants. As more immigrants arrived, they had to give up more of their space until there was practically nothing left. Since every effort to resist was met with force, there were hardly any of them to need the space.

You might be forgiven for wondering how a history of genocidal immigration in, say, Canada justifies immigration into Britain today? To the liberals it most certainly does. To the reasonable person, however, this can only mean that since the British took someone else's country and life in the 19th Century, they deserve to have their country and lives taken from them in the 21st. If that's what they mean, let them say it and the case can be argued honestly. If they mean something else, let them say what that is. If they do not mean the former and cannot think of a latter, let's hear no more from them about "historical reasons" for Britain's *alleged* moral responsibility to welcome immigrants.

In any case, there is a great problem with the notion that one puts the burden of guilt upon a people for the actions of a previous generation, especially actions which they would not carry out themselves, even if they had the opportunity to do so.

Enough said about Britain's unique responsibility. It is mentioned merely as an indication of how commonly known facts can have their meaning twisted by ignoring important details. The relevance is that Ireland's case is presented, without any apparent sense of irony, as being unique as well. This is merely to say, the same only different. In Ireland's case, it is supposed to be the solidarity of shared suffering.

This is even worse, for what it amounts to is that, because the British took our country from us, we must understand the experience well enough to give up our country now! If this is not what the liberals mean, what do they mean? It is almost impossible to discern from their incessant whining, any consistent point of view at all. They merely state the experience of the Famine, and other outrages perpetrated against the Irish people, as if the pro-immigration conclusion followed inevitably and

without argument. It is, of course, based on the belief that no-one will ever question them, and for the most part their place in the mainstream media means that they are right - at least for now. Thus this weak, central plank rests on never having been contradicted, and the argument rests on this plank alone.

The outrages perpetrated in Ireland by a foreign power prove the diametric opposite of that which they are purported to prove. The truth is that this historical experience underscores the life blood necessity for a nation to have a land of its own to pursue its own destiny, and its own interests, unhindered by any foreign people. The experience of rebellion, followed by repression, followed by rebellion compounds that truth, with the awful realisation that no peace - never mind Freedom and Justice - is possible in any other way.

Ireland has already endured a sustained period of forced immigration, which we call the Plantations. It is worth challenging anyone, in favour of the influx of foreigners today, whether they would seriously quibble with the description given in the last chapter of these plantations: that *"the decision to plant Ulster at that time was monstrous both in its idea and execution and has brought nothing but harm thereafter"*. Ireland is horribly partitioned. ***The cause was massive and sustained immigration.***

Indeed, the only areas, in which this plantation failed, failed because of the most vicious of violence, carried out by Irish people determined not to be removed. Can anyone contemplate the repetition of this violence against the more recent arrivals, so very much more different from the Scots Gaels of that time? If it is too much to bear, then consider whether we are willing to partition our country again to make space for these new people?

The general historical argument is worse than useless for the honest liberal, since it proves quite the opposite of what it is intended to prove; but then honest liberals are few and far between, and the argument will continue to be used. It has a superficial ring of truth about it and, given that Irish people have a tendency to accept the bad things said about the British Empire, we have to wonder who is making most flagrant use of prejudice in the original non-prejudicial sense of the word. However, a firm commitment to the truth will at least provide that solid ground from which to argue.

The second line of Liberal assault is related, though it stands entirely on its own too. It is the question of false compassion. We have heard it elsewhere, and the Pro-Life advocate will be well familiar with it. It is called "the Hard Case". Immigrants from the poorest nations on earth are arriving here for Social Welfare advantages. This can hardly fail to jar on the nerves of any sensible person. Thus, the term immigrant is being replaced by the altogether more whining "refugee". This person is, supposedly, on the run from some dreadful government in the Third World, which shall surely have his neck if he returns.

Apart from the near impossibility of ascertaining the veracity of such statements as the alleged refugee will make, (the government in question being unlikely to tell us for example that, yes, they really do want to kill him and the sooner the better), several others arise.

Firstly whether the so-called persecution from which he flees is persecution, in the sense which the ordinary person would understand it, or merely the application of law in the country whence he came. What we mean here is whether the law is, in the original instance, a justifiable one, which ought to be applied. If it were, the arrest

and detention of that person in his home country is altogether the best thing. In such an instance, it would seem that we are doing nothing less than importing criminal elements deliberately. The consequences are quite obvious and do not require elaboration.

There seems almost no way round this question save to try individuals in this country for the crimes they are alleged to have committed elsewhere and to deport those persons found guilty. That would be to turn Ireland into one giant courthouse for the sins of the world and cannot be within the serious contemplation of any person. It must be noted, however, that this is an element to the debate so far unheard, insofar as the question has revolved around whether or not the refugee is in danger of whatever from his own government, rather than whether the danger is merely that the fugitive from justice might not evade justice.

If we are foolish enough to contemplate such an enormous trial mechanism, how is the person to be tried? Under Irish law or the law of origin? It is impossible to try him under his country's law, unless we are to employ defence and prosecution counsel, as well as judges of every rank, conversant with the laws of every country in the world. If he is to be tried under Irish law, are we not making a moral judgement on the superiority of the West over the rest of the world? Are we not saying, in effect, that Western concepts of Justice are the only acceptable concepts? Are we not, thereby, making, without regard to culture, circumstance, time and place the most 'racist' commentary that has ever been officially made in Ireland? Once again, the liberal finds himself confronted by his own hypocrisy.

Of course, no thought has been given to such issues, because they look to the word "refugee" as a device to deceive the public into accepting immigrants. As such there is no desire to ascertain who is, and who is not, a genuine refugee. It is essentially a ploy. For example, they are particularly insistent that we take refugees from Castro's Cuba, yet they have been the most vocal in opposing efforts to oust this criminal regime over many years.

It is worth noting in this context that under both United Nations and E.U. immigration rules, persons discriminated against on the grounds of sexual persuasion - which is to say homosexual and paedophile perverts - have the right to the status of "refugee". When the hearts of the Irish people are meant to sob for the persecuted of the world, one wonders how many have given thought to *what* persecuted means, and just *who* the persecuted might be?

This is not to ignore the genuine injustices which occur daily around the world. It is not to ignore those injustice which occur daily, and unobtrusively, in Ireland under the guise of such Acts as the *Public Order Act* and the *Offences Against the State Act*. Such Acts include the wide powers, though currently unused, to suspend the Constitution and enact so-called emergency legislation. This is our own shining democratic lie, the Republic. To be caught on the wrong side of the law in Ireland is seldom to receive justice, as any political opponent of the System parties can verify. Need one mention the cavalier fashion with which such ideas are treated in the Six Counties?

In reviewing these indigenous instances, we come nearer the solution to the problem. The liberal cannot see the power to arrest and imprison as an injustice, but notes well the 'dangers' involved in potentially orthodox statements issued by the Catholic Hierarchy, or spoken innocuously from the pulpit.

The emigration of Irish people from our shores has been an outrage perpetrated if not for the purpose, then certainly with the effect of draining away

discontent. It would have been impossible to maintain the present Establishment in its incompetence and corruption, if it had been forced by pressure of population to take care of the minimum needs of the Irish people, who would have been here if emigration had not been available as a recourse.

For example, when the liberal points out that Irish people were allowed to migrate to America, Britain and elsewhere, it is imperative to remember just what a tragedy that exodus really was. We are inclined nowadays to speak of gratitude to such countries for having taken our people, yet, deliberately or not, they did our nation a great disservice. The exodus to America provided the route by which the semi-genocidal policy of population reduction, which led to and was a consequence of the Famine, might achieve most rapid success. We have not yet recovered. We will perhaps never recover, and we owe no one anything for facilitating this tragedy.

Britain undertook the policy that was to lead inevitably to the Famine in the belief that Ireland was overpopulated. She was overpopulated *if* the intent was to preserve the inhuman Landlord system through which British rule in Ireland was maintained and made profitable. Continued population growth would have necessitated, either the most dramatic alterations in that system, or would have resulted in agrarian revolution sooner rather than later, with all the attendant consequences for the Anglo-Irish ascendancy.

In the midst of the horrendous suffering, perhaps the most poignant note is set by the realisation that no-one at all paid a price. No-one was brought to book and held responsible. This was because the backdoor of outrage was open, and so many who would surely have forced a reckoning were gone. Gone generally to think no more about Ireland, the memories being too painful to recount for people who wished to move forward with their lives and forget. The phenomenon continues, even if it is without the same stark quality. This leakage of discontent maintains the current Establishment, allowing them to enjoy the fruits of the injustice of the System which they have maintained *against* the people, and of which they are the major beneficiaries.

It so happens that with each and every mass migration, there leaves these shores those people that the Irish economic model has failed utterly. They leave the stultifying and frustrating atmosphere in hope of something better, or at least a place where something better might more easily be created. Generally speaking, they are correct. A smaller nation is, paradoxically, harder to change at least insofar as it relates to an individual's personal experience. In the United States, the sheer size ensures that whatever one wants to do, there is likely to be some place where the freedom to do it is provided. This can be a good or a bad thing. What is certain is that within a small nation only one code of behaviour is practically possible, and only one model for economic endeavour is feasible. This is neither good nor bad in itself, merely a fact. However, since the foundation of the Irish State, the Establishment has enforced its model, and it has been almost exclusively a bad thing. It seems to the enterprising individual to be a complete waste to attempt to alter this. It is simply much easier to go.

We can only speculate as to what might have happened had our migrants not gone. We can be sure, however, that it would be a very different Ireland to-day, and few outside the direct beneficiaries of the current regime would fear any conceivable alternative.

If those generous people, who afforded the Irish a place, had simply rejected Irish immigrants, can anyone assert that we would not in fact be a better nation for it

today? It seems almost certain that we would not suffer the fools in Dail Eireann with their self-serving political patronage, nor would we tolerate the highly unrepresentative clique that calls itself a news media. We might even have ventured to lose that inferiority complex with regard to foreign states, which has us up to our necks in the mire of Federal Europe. We might have been insistent on the full fruits of what our national genius is capable of creating.

It is not difficult to transpose this thinking to the broader problem of refugees today and understand certain parallels. Let us look at the specific example of Castro's Cuba. Regardless of whether one really believes that such numbers could be escaping a totalitarian regime without the implicit connivance of high placed persons within the regime, it is surely nonsense to suppose that these people are thought of by Castro as a serious threat in Ennis, County Clare. It is surely with some sense of satisfaction that the Communist administration views the leakage of discontent, as its most committed opponents leave never to return. While their acceptance here in Ireland may salve some part of our consciences - for the decades of liberal-induced "neutrality" whilst Stalin, Khrushchev, and others murdered by the millions - it is no favour for the Cuban people. Each nation in its times of greatest injustice needs its rebels; to deprive it of them in the name of false compassion is a crime that cries out to heaven for vengeance.

It is not good enough to whine and wail about the fate of the individual by people, who would happily let millions suffer, and yet denounce as 'Fascist' extremists, any voice that is raised in defence of Cuban liberties *in* Cuba. It ought to be obvious that the problems of Cuba or Zaire must be solved there and not in Ennis, County Clare. Equally, the problems of Ennis can only be solved here, and not on the streets of London or New York. Are we not all sick and tired of this whining hypocrisy about injustice in the world? Why don't we simply tell these hypocrites to shut up!

The Irish government has done nothing, either to protest against the behaviour of criminal regimes in any meaningful way, and has continued, in the name of "free trade" to resist efforts to isolate these countries. We can hear them tell us, however, to open our cities, towns and villages for it would be heartless to do otherwise. Yet not one pound is to be lost in the pursuit of the godless market, in selling the products of monopoly Capitalism. Nor do we hear the Irish government complain about International Finance - the IMF, the World Bank and so on - subsidising the most corrupt of regimes, but who are, incidentally, reliable for the payment of interest on loans.

This should not surprise us really, since the people clamouring most loudly about the human rights of immigrants are the same characters, who turn up in every argument of Irish life, to decry in terms of false compassion the misfortunes of anyone so long as they are not patriotic, Irish and Catholic. To be one of those things is bad enough, and insofar as we are all Irish, we all suffer their ire at some point; yet they go to the point of self hatred. Immigrants, on the other hand, are subject to not one of these complaints. They are foreign, of various sometimes bizarre religious conviction, and are naturally not patriotic. In truth, it was only a matter of time before they came upon this 'cause', which is so amenable to all their confused prejudices.

Bear in mind the ideological pedigree. The refugee advocates are almost to a man and woman, the abortion advocates, the contraception advocates, the Europhiles,

the anti-Catholic bigots. In other words, the whole rotten cabal of the Left. If anyone should doubt the correct attitude to immigration, we should take our cue from the age-old Irish custom of acknowledging the enemies of our enemies as our friend.

It is clear, for example, from the position of Democratic Left, who proposed an amnesty for all currently illegal immigrants said then to number 40,000 in the statement by Minister John O'Donoghue, that the Left is pursuing a deliberate strategy. One might take the Minister at his word. Whether or not it is this number, you can be sure that under current policy it is likely to become very much more. Now think of that number in the various key marginal constituencies of Dublin, and it becomes clear that what is sought is a client group by the Left of guaranteed votes carrying over into guaranteed seats. This is exactly what the Left has done elsewhere in Europe.

Corruption is commonplace in Ireland today and takes many diverse forms. While it would be enough to reject the influx of immigration on the grounds of the dishonesty of its advocates and their long term agenda, it is worth stating clearly what is the case for an *Irish Ireland*. As we concentrate our minds on the loss of national independence through European Federalism, we ought to remember that the goal and ideal of the Irish Founding Fathers, so aptly encapsulated by Pearse, was an Ireland not free merely but Gaelic as well, and not Gaelic merely but free as well. The patriots of Ireland, who undertook the struggle for freedom over the centuries, could hardly have contemplated the influx of a large alien minority, yet we need not doubt what they would have thought of it.

That is the great danger of this debate, that we should lose ourselves in material arguments concerning the cost of immigration. By so doing, we miss the most profound aspect of the problem. The question is, in essence, whether Ireland is to be, or not to be.

As a nation of some three to four million, it is not, nor can it ever be, an economic question as to whether we can bear the influx of refugees and others. It is a biological one, which is that we simply do not have the numbers of our own people to make room for others, without altering beyond recognition the whole nature of the country - not merely ethnically, but culturally, socially, politically, religiously and otherwise. The very principle of introducing foreigners in large numbers is the idea of altering the nation irreversibly. We know this does not bother the advocates, but it should concern any person who concerns himself with Ireland as an independent identity worth protecting for its own sake.

Although the figures generally only crop up in the context of debating means by which to increase the number, it is a fact that Ireland receives a tourist population many times in excess of her own each and every year. These tourists raise revenue for the exchequer and, as tourists, it would be unreasonable to complain about this. Nonetheless, it remains that no other European country, save perhaps Monaco, receives such a population, and as such it may be conservatively estimated that at any given time ten per cent of the actual people present on the island are not Irish. This is never mentioned in the context of the immigration question, because tourists have no intention of remaining in the country, and also as tourists they make an economic contribution in foreign currency rather than acting as a drain on the welfare system. They are here nonetheless, and it is incredible to make the argument that without immigrants, we are a closed society, or are in some ways missing out on the cosmopolitan atmosphere which these people could create. That is simply not the case.

On the other hand, it must be noted that after their visit - however long or short - the tourist has the intention to go home. As such, Ireland has the best of both worlds, which is that internationalist flavour which we are supposed to prize so highly, while preserving the essential integrity of the Irish culture insofar as we are the only ones who are always here, the only ones who shape the nation's destiny. What can the liberals mean by opening the country up to diverse influences unless they mean, not the sharing of cultural awareness but the denigration and replacement of all that is specifically Irish with something that is a hybrid. Neither Irish nor anything else in any real sense.

When we speak of the possibility of a large immigrant *minority*, remember that in doing so we are being optimistic. With that would come all the attendant problems which have faced other European nations. It does not have much to recommend it except to the bloody minded. In reality, with a population as small as ours, it does not require a great imagination to foresee an immigrant *majority*. In that case, the Irish nation would have ceased to exist as we know it, and the new 'Ireland' would have become something which had nothing whatever in common with what it means when we speak of Ireland today.

The Baltic states had precisely this situation thrust upon them by the Soviet invaders in 1940, who sought and generally succeeded in crippling the national identities of those states, when Joseph Stalin forcibly removed large sections of their native population to the death camps of Siberia and replaced them with ethnic Russians. It was quite common as a result for many Westerners to forget that any part of that Soviet Empire was separate, and to speak of all of it casually as "Russia". Today, the problems those nations face in attempting to re-establish themselves are enormous - perhaps beyond solution - and it remains between possible and likely that they may yet fall into the kind of barbaric ethnic clashes witnessed in the former Yugoslavia. It has been contended that in such an instance, the finely balanced proportions of Russian majorities will result in these states being re-absorbed into Russia. If that happens, we will only be able to speak of the ancient nations of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in the historical context, much as we might speak of the Mayans or the Aztecs who also fell to immigration.

There is here no question of 'racism' in the manner which such terms of abuse are used in the media, the newest of them being the idiot accusation that the Government, in imposing any restrictions whatever on immigration, is seeking to maintain a "White Ireland" policy. In truth, though it might make a marked difference to the type of country which replaces our Ireland, it makes no appreciable difference to us whether we are swamped by European foreigners, Asian or African foreigners.

Even if it is the refugee influx which has brought the question to the public's attention, the reality is that Ireland has had for some years an ever increasing immigration rate, hidden from public view and discussion merely because that influx has been of E.U. nationals and therefore off the agenda for political action as a legal right established by the various Treaties. Consequently, no person interested in preserving the unique heritage of Ireland can afford to be any more sanguine about Germans, French, or even British in large numbers. We are and will remain a relatively tiny nation for the foreseeable future, and it would take very little to upset that delicate balance which preserves our nationhood and with it the inheritance of future generations.

The real issue is integration, which is to say the ability of foreign immigrants to blend into this society without changing it utterly. So it is obviously true that Westerners as such, and probably British people in particular, are more likely to quickly find their feet in this country and blend in, familiar as they are with similar patterns of living. It would remain true, nonetheless, that too many such people cannot integrate or are not likely to do so.

In short, the measure of successful immigration policy is that we carry no more than one generation *identifiable* as immigrants. With any peoples from the British Isles who remain here, this is generally the case with the second generation maintaining no particular link with their origin and being no different than their peers. Continental foreigners, however, present a more intractable problem since they tend not to blend quite so quickly, and their numbers must in consequence be more strictly controlled. Honesty rather than so-called "racism" demands that it be stated clearly that non-Europeans create the most intractable problem of all.

In spite of the pleading protestations of the Liberal media, the immigrant populations in each and every European country, which has them in large numbers, have failed utterly to integrate and have remained several generations as a foreign element; not merely a foreign element in the eyes of the host population, which ironically has for the most part turned head over heels in the attempt at integration. It is in the eyes of the immigrants themselves that the sense of ethnic identity and foreignness has remained strong, and far from wishing to be seen as individuals have behaved, and sought to be seen, as a group. National statistics, registering ethnic origin and identity, have in each case been demanded not by 'raving racists' but by the immigrant communities themselves.

Although their percentage within the host country has remained officially never more than ten per cent in any European state, does anyone seriously doubt, for example, that they have changed the face of England forever? There is little point in arguing that they have changed it for the better. The idea that these countries would be permanently altered was not in the minds of the peoples of these countries and, in each case, the opposition has grown to what is increasingly seen as a disturbing problem.

The real racists are the people who insist that Ireland has not taken its share of immigration, because they are the ones who are not counting the whites and are measuring the issue in terms of coloureds. It is disingenuous to accuse your opponent of the fault which lies most heavily upon oneself, and it remains true that Irish patriots, as opposed to either racists or liberals, make no such distinction. Rather it is the number and the likelihood of integration that is the only meaningful measure. By that reckoning, we already have an excessive number, even if not one more were to arrive. It would necessarily be a priority for a national government to address the issues involved honestly.



Breaking the Civil War Mould

The circumstances attending the foundation of the Irish State could hardly have been less propitious. That the Treaty, signed in 1921 with the British Government, was inadequate on all major points in addressing the central grievance which had led the men out in 1916 and again from 1918 to 21, is universally agreed both by those who recommended its ratification, and those who vehemently opposed it. We have noted in a previous chapter, how it succeeded in warping the whole frame of political thought in the South into an argument of no modern relevance. To this day, the fragments of that argument sit monolithic and opposed theoretically across the Dail. The Civil War, to which the argument led, was a tragedy beyond comprehension. The advantage of hindsight fails to remove altogether some of the questions raised as to what *might* have been.

It was the clichéd rallying cry of the Progressive Democrats at their launch to break the mould of Civil War politics. They have not succeeded. This is primarily because they had no idea what that mould was anymore, and sought to see it merely in terms of the existence of the non-ideological party system of Fianna Fail/Fine Gael. That wasn't, and isn't, the most important aspect of the Civil War legacy, nor is it the one we ought to seek to understand and overcome. What the PDs and others have sought to do is to forget the Civil War - which is easily done - but hardly addresses the issues arising. Indeed, simply to forget would leave such problems as are hangovers from it without explanation, and a problem without explanation is generally also one without solution.

The events of that time need fuller understanding, so that the essence of what we have lived through since may be faced. The most profound fact to emerge in recent times is the realisation that there were not two sides to the Civil War but three, and that two of them lost to the third party which was not really native at all. The irony is that one of the losing sides of the triangle finds itself seen as being part of the winning side and, consequently, takes much of the blame for actions by that side over which it had no control.

On the Republican side the issue is reasonably clear, and the intentions of the main protagonists are more or less what they appear to be. They were opposed to the Treaty since it did not provide the Republic. Now there has been some glossing done on that position in recent times to make it appear that partition was a major factor in that objection. The reason for this is rather obvious, since the semi-modern reader would have difficulty, from the Fifties onwards, in sympathising with the cause which had been fought over an Oath of Allegiance and led to so many deaths, when subsequent events had revealed so clearly that Pro-Treaty claims that the Oath could not last once the State was firmly established were so demonstrably true. Partition, however, which is still with us is a more plausible reason. Certainly, whatever one's

personal opinion, it is easy to recognise that at least the thing is of a proportion worth fighting about, even if one might not fight about it oneself. So the myth was born.

This is not true. Partition was accepted on both sides of the Treaty debate to be a temporary situation, and not related at all to the argument taking place. No one believed it would last and the arrangement, which the British Government had made with the Unionists, was regarded as a satisfactory interim step on easing the North back into unity. That this would happen soon was little doubted by anyone, and subsequent events are not relevant to assessing what was in the minds of the Republican movement at the time. They didn't break on partition.

With the benefit of hindsight, but probably more so by virtue of distance, it is an easy thing to say that the Republican side had the monopoly of courage. If they were baulking on the Oath of Allegiance to a British King, and in faithfulness to the Republic declared outside the G.P.O. some years earlier, then they were surely the men of no compromise, of greater gallantry than their opponents. The ones who would not sell out.

With almost no exceptions, this is substantially true though sadly it means nothing. It meant nothing for the realpolitik of the times they were living in, or the times we are living in now. It well behooves any genuine Irish patriot to speak with respect when talking of the Republican soldiers of 1921-22. They saw a course before them and took it manfully in a way we have not seen anyone in Ireland do since. They were also wrong, so utterly and tragically wrong that their mistake very nearly destroyed everything that they fought for, and perhaps in a sense did destroy it. They were, as they noted themselves, soldiers not politicians, and though the term 'politician' has been given a pejorative and negative meaning, in the best sense it is both the authority and responsibility to take an holistic view of the conditions prevailing and make the best decision in the interests of the nation.

The truth is that by the time the Treaty was laid before the Dail, there was something considerably less than no choice but to accept it. In fact, if the British had had the faintest notion as to just how poor a position the Irish national forces were in, a much worse formula would have been presented and equally would have had to be accepted. The man primarily responsible for such a state of affairs was, ironically as it turned out, none other than Eamonn DeValera.

DeValera is a name which has always conjured up the extremes of emotion in Ireland. He has variously been loved and hated, yet it is testimony to the innate slyness of the man that he has been loved in large part by those who ought to have hated him, and those who hated him would have hated him the more if they knew then any part of what we know now. That he has become a figure of fun in more recent times among liberals, as a caricature conservative, is amusing since no-one did more to restrict the creation of a confessional Catholic State during that period in which the forces which favoured it had a practical possibility of making it a reality. But then that was his genius - being the caricature of that which he was absolutely not. Eight or more decades ago he was the Republican 'extremist'.

It is difficult to look at the career of this man without being struck immediately by two features. The first is the incredible ability to emerge unscathed from disasters even those either partly or primarily of his making. Secondly, that that skill was at all

times employed for the furtherance of the only cause which he cared deeply about - Eamonn DeValera. Certainly no political figure on the Irish side bears greater responsibility for the Civil War than he, and no figure escaped more comprehensively the logical consequences of his actions than he.

A hero among certain ill-informed Republicans, he was in fact the first to break with the Republic. For it was DeValera, in the negotiations leading up to the Truce, who conceded in private correspondence with Lloyd George that the Treaty, in whatever form it might emerge from the talks in London, would definitely not include a Republic. As such, the negotiators hands were tied in dealing with the British, since the central point of later conflict was not even on the agenda at the talks. It is now common knowledge that his refusal to attend the talks was based on this awareness that there was no possibility of bringing back the Republic and, with the astuteness which was to characterise all his action, he had Michael Collins lead the delegation to London instead.

What was in his mind can clearly be gleaned from subsequent events, though it did not proceed exactly as he had planned. DeValera had spent most of the War of Independence in America during which time Michael Collins had effectively led the war effort at home. The recognition and popularity of Collins throughout the country was enormous, and in the Army it was tantamount to devotion. DeValera knew that some form of free government would come back with the Treaty and his position of nominal superiority was not likely to hold in the longer term. The people held him in some affection but had largely forgotten him, and the Army more knowledgeable on the conflicts within the Movement had no respect for him at all. In any new government, he could only expect to take second place to Collins.

The problem as he saw it was to undermine Collins' position both with the country and the Army, and the means would be to send him to London on the fools errand for a Republic. Of course, that would not be achieved and Collins could then be cast, as in some circles he still is today, as a traitor to the Republican cause. He knew full well that he would then be the only figure of sufficient political stature within the Movement to take the position, or the equivalent position that he had illegally claimed in America - namely of President of the Irish Republic.

The plan was driven seriously off the rails on several grounds. *Firstly*, the negotiators brought back a substantially better Treaty than he had anticipated, and the Irish Free State, which Collins described as "*the freedom to achieve freedom*", was widely accepted throughout the country as being exactly that. *Secondly*, he grossly underestimated both the popularity and the personal charisma of Collins, as well as the enormous influence in the Movement which was exercised by the I.R.B. *Thirdly*, he underestimated the determination of those who would oppose the Treaty. They were insistent on taking more than the political scalp of the delegation, and weren't going to accept it as a *fait accompli* just because it was delivered a little more palatably by him.

DeValera's Document No. 2, which Arthur Griffith had published during the debates, revealed just how hollow his striding up and down the Dail chamber against the Treaty actually was. In fact, his proposed alternative was substantially the same document on the essentials, including an Oath of Allegiance and excluding a declared Republic. This was, of course, because working with the same circumstances

as the negotiators had worked with, he drew the same inevitable conclusions. The document had one difference, however. The signature of British Government acceptance was not on it, and undoubtedly the British would look on the failure to ratify as bad faith. The significant development from the revelation of DeValera's true position was that he lost all credibility among the anti-Treaty faction of the Army. He never subsequently regained it.

There can be little doubt that his withdrawal from the Dail, following the Treaty vote and the subsequent hysterical tour of the country denouncing the Provisional Government and the Treaty, was an effort to restore that credibility *and* an attempt to assume the premier position on the Republican side. Since, however, it was the officer and soldier volunteers who would make the running on this side, from the conclusion of the debate onwards, his failure meant that the only way he could assume that position was by the ultimate failure of Republican arms. Thereafter, it would be necessary to force that wing of the party back to legal means, where his political acumen would place him more naturally to the fore. The only effect then, of the histrionic oratory unleashed by him, was to set fuel to the flames of a Civil War.

Thereafter, only tragedy could ensue. There was never, of course, any doubt as to how the Republican forces would fare. Indeed, a good deal of Collins thinking on the Treaty was based on the weaknesses of the united Irish side, which the Truce period engineered by De Valera, had caused. He had spoken strongly against the Truce for precisely the reason that it seemed impossible to him that the IRA could take effectively to the field again afterwards. During that time the British forces were confined to barracks, but significantly they were also relieved from the danger of attack, given time to re-train in conditions which were well provisioned, and given time to rest and prepare. IRA men on the run, however, needed to return home and Tom Barry, who subsequently led Republican resistance, bemoaned that at least 30% of the fighting force could not be expected to return if the Truce produced nothing.

The mood of the country was overwhelming for the Treaty, which had its own bearing on the issue. Even allowing for the rejection of majority opinion as such, there was the very practical question of how to function as a guerrilla force without the kind of public support which had previously been vital. How it was that Republican leaders felt that such a campaign could be conducted against a native Government has never been explained. In truth their plans were ill formed and generally ill-executed. There was never any possibility of success and, in military terms, they probably lasted as long as the reluctance of Michael Collins to deal ruthlessly with their resistance lasted. This was, in fact, an extraordinarily long time, and historians speculate as to whether the delay in storming the Four Courts gave the impression of weakness to the Republicans, which resulted in a false confidence leading to blood shed. One can never be sure, but the facts were nonetheless that once the Free State did act, its triumph was assured before it began.

In this regard, the length of the War from beginning to end is misleading, and seems to suggest a much more closely run thing. In reality, the fighting was prolonged primarily by the Free States side's deliberate intransigence, which was designed to ensure not only a victory over the rebels, but the annihilation of its

leadership. Here again, De Valera was more than fortunate. What goes deliberately unnoticed in certain circles, however, is that almost all of the incidents of callous brutality on the Free State side occurred in the period of prolonging when, militarily speaking, the IRA had been roundly defeated and when, most significantly of all, Michael Collins was dead.

To the objective observer, the Free State conducted not one war but two. Each of them was conducted by such very different methods, and for such very different motives, that something enormous must have occurred on the Free State side during the period. Indeed it had. The State had had a successful coup d'état, the most immediate and tragic consequence being the death of General Collins; the broader effects being an incalculable disaster.

If Michael Collins, and those who thought like him, had been opposed to the Truce, they were no less reluctant on the Treaty itself. Yet in practical terms, there was no other option; and they were practical men. He and they, however, were absolutely determined to make the Treaty work as the freedom to achieve freedom, and never once accepted it as the definitive settlement of Ireland's claim to Nationhood. Had the Republican leadership accepted the outcome of the Dail vote and the subsequent General Election endorsement, this view would undoubtedly have prevailed. That it did not is the great tragedy of the century.

Within the camp of the Treaty's acceptors were a large and influential group, for whom the Treaty was adequate and who planned nothing more than it. As a positive assertion, they were happy to work indefinitely within its limits, and saw as dangerous any and all efforts to extend the interpretation of its provisions. To them, any attempt to alter the Treaty unilaterally was anathema. The primary figures were William Cosgrave and Kevin O'Higgins, but O'Higgins was above all the malignant party.

As a result of Republican intransigence, Collins was forced to take allies where he could. These men would most probably have been shunted to the sidelines if more determined men had been available to him. Generally-speaking, however, they went the other way. As such, the Cabinet of the Provisional Government was dominated by what we might call the "Free State satisfied". They drew the same conclusions on the Treaty insofar as it related to the consequences of rejecting it or the potential consequences of immediately abrogating it, but they went much further in their timidity. The measure of British power, which drew from Collins the best of his pragmatism, drew from them sheer terror. Thus, the policy which he was pursuing, which several times seemed to endanger the concessions which had been won - risking the wholehearted return of British forces and their own ruination - led them to consort directly with the British Cabinet. Inevitably, they were against the Provisional Government's Chairman, who was also the Commander in Chief of the newly formed National Army.

Just how many of them realised where all this was leading when they began is unclear. It would appear, for example, that General Mulcahy did not but even as a passive participant in the conspiracy, there cannot be any exculpating his or their responsibility in what followed. In any case, by virtue of the conspiracy, Collins was removed not only from the position of Chairman of the Provisional government, but from the Cabinet altogether. By agreement, no announcement to that effect was made,

and to allay what would undoubtedly have been a tremendous public backlash, a War Council was created with Collins remaining Commander-in-Chief of the Army. As such, the more dangerous aspects of his policies (as the Free Staters saw it) remained operative, namely that arms were still being supplied to Northern units of the IRA to defend Catholics in the Six County area, and the efforts to reach a reasonable conclusion to the conflict in the South continued.

With hindsight, Collins' thinking here is quite clear. It was not particularly meaningful in power political terms that his enemies had moved against him in the Free State Cabinet, except insofar as it now seemed evident both what they intended and who they were. Their inability to reveal themselves publicly was a fundamental weakness and his position in the Army, as well as Head Centre of the I.R.B. network, meant that to all intents and purposes, he was still in control. Outside the Cabinet, however, though one might have a gauge of just how strong the manoeuvrings were, it was difficult with the unfinished War to see how a root and branch restructuring of the Free State might be achieved, without a dangerous weakening of the war effort. It seemed that nothing, save an overwhelming defeat in the field, was likely to get Republican leaders to see the folly of continuing. So it had to be. Collins set about winning the war comprehensively. In fact, by the time he made the fateful journey to Cork, which was to be his last, that objective had substantially been achieved. There was little doubt that an end to the War was in sight.

The terms which Collins was offering are particularly interesting, viewed both in terms of the attitudes adopted after his death and what he intended. There is little doubt now that he intended to draw from the Republican movement to fill the positions in Government that would have been forcibly vacated by Cosgrave and the others, in the inevitable settling of accounts. It is even conceivable that such an agreement was to be concluded in Cork on that very journey, and that his return to Dublin was to be the end of the coup d'état faction.

In any case, they were in a panic. Having engineered the War by British design, they were aware that the British Government considered an early end to the War as contrary to their interests. They wanted not merely Republican acceptance of the Treaty, but the annihilation of Republicanism as such, and with it as many Republicans as possible. The long and pointless extension of the conflict, with its many atrocities after Collins' death, was in their interest and their best case scenario. His death was a vital constituent for the success of their efforts, and so it was that his fate was sealed.

Like so many things in Ireland since, there is, of course, the official version of the tragedy of Michael Collins' death, which bears only the scantest resemblance to what actually happened. The truth is that he was murdered with calm deliberateness, and in the interests of a foreign power by men of his own government as the price of their maintenance of position. Every circumstance surrounding the events of Beal na Blath make this fact evident and, indeed, all subsequent efforts to disprove the truth of the foul act and hide its perpetrators have only added to the conclusion. Even the perfidious suggestions that De Valera was responsible is merely meant to satisfy conspiracy theorists with the wrong theory, and utilise the prejudgement that De Valera was capable of anything in the service of freeing the real criminals from responsibility.

If you must put a name to the man responsible for the murder of Michael Collins, and the infinite catastrophe which flowed from it, then that name would be (not he who pulled the trigger, but he who ordered the act) William Cosgrave. Yet Tim Pat Coogan in his book, *The IRA*, laughingly calls Cosgrave "*a man of supreme integrity*".

After seven hundred years, Ireland had for the first time concluded its first full step forward to national freedom. The despicable act of Michael Collins' betrayal and murder, let loose the foul contents of a sewer of corruption, which has poured out across the nation and its aspirations ever since. The immensity of the loss will never be calculable, for we can never know what might have been, but no punishment, either intellectual now or physical if we had had the opportunity then, can have been too much for those who planned and executed the deed.

Thereafter, secured in their tenure, the conspirators began the ruthless removal of every vestige of the actions which had sought to make the Treaty the freedom to achieve freedom. Members of the I.R.B., who were close to Collins in person and in thinking, were systematically removed from positions in the Army and Government with no compunction as to service rendered to the nation. The immediate consequence was the vicious turn to the Civil War, to underline to any Republican who might doubt it that none of the negotiations they had been involved in had any bearing on the new Government's policy. During the following year, while Cosgrave was annihilating the IRA, some of the most atrocious acts of brutality were committed by Free State forces, which were to live in folk memory - engendering bitterness down to this day. The Catholics in the North were, of course, simply abandoned to their fate. The grey pallor of Reaction fell across the hopes and dreams, which had burned so brightly since Pearse had read the Proclamation.

Ironically, when the name of Collins is mentioned nowadays, it is generally either positively by the direct inheritors and beneficiaries of his death, or negatively by those who blame him for acts carried out against his wishes and after his death. That the Treaty was a failure is beyond doubt, but whether it needed to be is not. Republican assertions that they were proved right in their opposition to it simply do not stand up to scrutiny. Understanding the Treaty, in terms of the traitors who later came to implement it, tells us nothing of the character and intent of those who signed it, nor anything either of what might have happened if things had worked out differently.

The Boundary Commission, for example, upon which Collins placed his hopes for an early end to partition might have produced something entirely different with his Government in place and with Republican support. As it was, an agreement had been reached with the Northern Premier to bypass the Commission in favour of a straight deal, which granted almost half of the territory of the Six County area to the Free State. Even the breach of that agreement by the Northern side, under the intense pressure of Sir Henry Wilson, reveals that nothing like the eventual Boundary Commission result was expected by the Unionists at the time. That Cosgrave's Government later bungled the Commission (probably deliberately) cannot be blamed on the Treaty, or the persons who supported it. The paragraph quite clearly meant something entirely different from what transpired.

It is on the vexed issue of the Republic, however, that Michael Collins' mind

had worked so adroitly, and it is here that Republican thinking generally was shown to be very shallow. It is apparent that their knowledge of what they meant by Republic was limited to the word itself, and that it would have been far more dangerous to have sent any of them to negotiate, for they would as likely have given anything away for the word without the substance. As it was the delegation was quick to see that, within the British obsession for avoiding the use of the inflammatory term, there lay the possibility of extracting real concessions if only they would relinquish an essentially meaningless title.

Specifically, this something, which was not well noted by observers at the time, but which the readers of this book will understand the importance of immediately, was that Collins demanded and got fiscal autonomy under the Treaty, the most important advance on Home Rule, and the very one which would have made all else possible. If, in an earlier chapter we have dealt with the imperative for a free nation of Monetary Reform, it was this provision of the Treaty which made that possible. It was not built upon by the succeeding administration, but this tells us nothing about the Treaty, only quite a lot about them.

What he established, before the ratification process was complete, was something not in the text of the document itself, Constitutional Government. Above all things bequeathed to the Irish people by Michael Collins was the principle, the bedrock of real Republicanism, Constitutional form. In essence, it is this which marks the fundamental break with what had gone before, the whole British conception of Government being founded on the principle of the primacy of Parliament and the Crown. The Irish would thereafter have the true republican conception, that is the limitation of the legislature by the force of a written Constitution, checking and controlling the advance of the State into the nooks and crannies of civil life. This would restrict it to areas of relevance for State action, leaving all else to the individual, to the maximum freedom commensurate with the Common Good.

So little has been written of Constitutionalism as such in Ireland, that the casual reviewer could be forgiven for not understanding the relevance of this most significant post-Treaty development. The British government of the time, however, was not slow to grasp what had happened, and it played no small part in their perception that, far from having tricked the Irish in the document, they had left it so open to be so easily undermined that, for all practical purposes, the spirit of the agreement had been broken even while the ratification process was in train. The idea of a Free State constitution was being floated even during the Dail debates as the means by which the *de facto* Republic would be established. It is interesting to note in this regard that the constitutional form was so effective that the essence of the Republic was already contained within it, to the point that under the 1937 Constitution no changes were required to give effect to the declaration of the Republic in 1949.

In every sense, however, save the symbolic which always played a disproportionate role in the thinking of post-Treaty Republicanism, the Free State constitution was superior to the 1937 document. In many ways, the latter was a regression. Of course, as Catholics, we might take issue with the absence of specific religious sentiment in the original, but a closer reading reveals there is not much more

than shadow about the so-called Catholic nature of DeValera's version. Certainly, with the only really solid element, the prohibition of Divorce, removed there is absolutely nothing to bind us except foolish sentiment to that thoroughly flawed document.

This is not to suggest for a moment that the Free State form is one which we would sensibly advocate as a replacement. Bearing in mind that it suffered many of the restrictions forced by the British, it is, nonetheless, a remarkable departure from the bounds of the original Treaty. Bear in mind that this considerable advance was made within months, and before all the forces of the Crown had left the country. Moreover, it contained a provision which we might well have cause to envy today, which is that a number of electors could by petition force a referendum to make changes to the Constitution without requiring the assent of the legislature. It is obviously by this mechanism that the intended declaration of the Republic *de jure* was to be achieved and, unlike the administration which eventually worked the Treaty, it is impossible to imagine that given the pace of change already underway that this would have had to await the passage of more than twenty eight years.

What greater monument to the crass hypocrisy of Fianna Fail and its founder, Eamonn DeValera, than that so many years of their government would pass with the Republic undeclared, only to be left to a Fine Gael one to act - while they excoriated the memory of the man who left them with the instrument by which it might have been done at any time.

Indeed, it is questionable as to whether Fianna Fail had the notion of Constitutional Government in mind at all. There is no doubt that their various efforts at changing their own enacted constitution reveal an hostility to the notion *and* a developed regard for the very British idea of the primacy of Parliament. The precedent, however, had been set, and it would have been difficult to have simply removed the document as the close vote in 1937 shows.

To the average person in the street, it might not seem to matter very much. It might seem a very academic argument. Surely, there is no problem so long as we are ruled by our own? After all, Britain is a democracy and so are we. Wrong, Ireland has become a democracy, but was not intended to have that governmental form. In fact, such a form is a hangover of colonial rule not properly suited to Irish circumstances, nor indeed is it suited to any truly free people though we would leave the British to have themselves ruled howsoever they wish. For us and our purposes, we have a God given right to something better. *We have a right to a Republic.*

The 1937 Constitution, quite apart from those elements which are questionable, from the standpoint of Catholic Social Teaching either by the commission of gross errors or by omission of what ought to have been there, is a profoundly un-Republican document. Within the bounds set by the precedent of having to enact a Constitution, it returns again and again to the principle of the primacy of Parliament, and cedes to Parliament many of the rights of the citizen which it ought to have guarded.

In the Free State Constitution, we have within the idea of the Senate a first beginning on the notion of vocational organisation, for example, and the important role it might play in the overall organisation of the State. It is in embryonic form and suffered the embarrassment of having allowed the selection of Unionist representation through the

Universities, which undoubtedly contributed to its unpopularity. In reality, however, this is no more sensible than to reject the Senate on the grounds that it provides a forum for the likes of, say, David Norris. It is a problem of implementation, not a problem of form. No serious student doubts that the reason for the emasculation of the Senate was that it stood in Fianna Fail's way on several occasions, sometimes to the good and sometimes not so. The destruction of the Senate in all but name was, however, a democratic and dramatically un-Republican act. Within the idea as such was a potential not realised, which would have made such things as the national wage agreements and so forth a natural part of public life at a much earlier stage, and would have probably created a much fairer and better system of decision making. We will never know.

In condemning the democratic idea, it is important to understand what we mean by that, so that it is not confused with an attempt to justify dictatorship or tyranny. This is a delicate problem, since the general public has been taught to believe that there are essentially only two points of view: the dictatorial and the democratic. That one is tyranny and the other freedom. In fact, there is a potential for tyranny lying at the heart of democracy, of which no obvious dictatorship could ever avail.

If we take the example of Britain, with its absolute primacy of Parliament, we can see a classic weakness at the core of democracy as a means of preserving freedom. For though Parliament is elected by the people, there is thereafter no limitation whatever on the powers that may be exercised by Parliament. The so-called separation of powers between the Executive, which in this case is the Crown, the Legislature, the Commons and Lords together, and the Judiciary is meaningless in practice. All the powers of the Crown are exercised by the government, which is to say the Cabinet enjoying the confidence of Parliament. The Judiciary, apart from being selected by the Government at its lower levels, has the Law Lords as the final Court of Appeal with the nominations for the peerage being through the Crown, but on the "advice" of Government.

There is, of course, convention and the natural expectations of the people, which might create a revolutionary atmosphere if the Government of the day were to flex too strongly the muscle of power at its disposal. But a system, which has only the potential of revolution to protect itself from descent into tyranny, is not of itself a free government. On several occasions in British history, such a form has given way to brutal dictatorship as in the instance when Oliver Cromwell was chosen as Lord Protector by Parliament. That it has not done so in more recent times is not a guarantee. *Where* the power rests is the measure of free government, not on *how* benignly it is or is not exercised. In truth, the ratification of the various European Treaties by Britain, without consultation with its people or indeed any form of restriction on the prerogative of Parliament, sounds perhaps a deeper warning on this form than the excesses of centuries past.

Democracy in the modern State must be by representation, which means that it always carries within itself the seed of its own destruction. For the will of the people as such must run through the conduit of the political Party System and is, therefore, subject to a series of abuses along the way, which render it entirely possible that the final decisions made have little or no relationship with the original will expressed at the ballot box. This is graphically demonstrated by the widespread opinion

that politicians say one thing before an election, and do something else entirely once elected. To the objection that it is up to people themselves to hold them to their promises, we might raise several objections. *Firstly*, it is not up to the people to do so. They have a right to expect to get what they vote for, otherwise the system is a fraud from start to finish. *Secondly*, issues which dominate the General Election campaigns whereby the democratic representatives are chosen, may not be the ones which dominate the life of the government, and as such people are not even making a choice on such matters at the election. *Thirdly*, as a adjunct, people often choose parties or persons for a specific set of reasons and, though they would prefer to have them act on other matters in a particular way, they have no mechanism by which to enforce that.

Therefore, the central claim of democracy, which is that with all its admitted flaws it is at least the will of the people, is not borne out in practice. A practical illustration is the issue of Abortion. In Britain, the people have never been, and doubtless will never be, consulted on whether or not they are willing to accept the liberal abortion laws. It makes no difference what that decision might be since they have not been consulted. During the 1996 General Election, the Labour Party Leader, now Prime Minister Tony Blair, went so far as to say that despite the presence of candidates for the Pro-life Alliance, he was determined that it not become an issue influencing the outcome. Whatever we might think as regards how many people in England favour abortion, we cannot doubt that people who were opposed nonetheless voted for representatives in Parliament who were in favour.

In Ireland, in spite of the Supreme Court ruling in X, the very existence of the Constitution tilts the argument in favour of having the people decide this issue themselves outside of the remit of Parliament. Even a flawed Constitutional form gives force to the notion of the limitations of Government, and as such acts as guarantor to freedom and the rights of the common citizen. Here again, the declaration arises that the Constitution is too blunt an instrument for dealing with such a complex matter and that it ought to be dealt with by legislation. The advocates of this view are, of course, pro-abortion in sentiment since the effect of what they are saying would be to legalise widespread abortion. More than that, they are advocates of the primacy of Parliament and, though they fear to say it, they are fundamentally opposed to Constitutional Government itself.

We are fortunate in this country to have the principle of Constitutional form as a bulwark against government excess, and the illustrative example gives an insight into just how valuable this can be. However, the same issue can give us equal insight into just how flawed and inadequate it is in the present form. Thus, we may be thankful that we have a Constitution, but our gratitude should not blind us to the need for fundamental reforms.

The 1937 Constitution was clearly framed by persons who were forced by circumstances, and working off the precedent of the Free State, to enact a Constitution, but they were just as clearly not Constitutionlists as such. They had the letter of the thing without the spirit, and it shows. The theory of the primacy of Parliament reeks through the document, and makes it of limited use to those of us who would wish to

protect the fundamental freedoms of the people, and who would have the fundamental principles of decent society enacted inalienably into the basic law.

The current endeavours to enact a new Constitution for Ireland open up a series of appalling possibilities. The surface indications of thinking, which can be gleaned through the report of the Constitutional Review Group, are worrying in their implications, but much more ominous for the thinking person is the knowledge of just how much goes on beneath the surface of public life in Ireland. The attitude of gross contempt for the 1937 model shown by the most vociferous liberals in the Dail is much more than just the issues on which they take a public stance. Rather more significant is the underlying philosophy behind their objections, which is that they clearly object in principle to any function of government being restricted by any force whatsoever outside the party political process.

The problem for Nationalists is the tendency to take up the defence of Constitutionalism on the very poor ground of the aforementioned document. It is surely not worth defending in itself, riddled as it is with contradiction between high sounding principles, which are negated by the prescribed method of enactment with regard to the potentially nebulous concepts of "*public order and morality*". As such, we find ourselves defending a situation which is profoundly unsatisfactory, and doing so as usual in the fear of something much worse. It was undoubtedly our tendency to do so that led the Reynolds Government to believe that the 1992 amendment for limited abortion was one which could be palmed off. How nearly right they were is truly frightening.

The current thinking seems to be that the people will not stomach yet a total revision, so the idea is to raise repeatedly often imaginary difficulties with the working of the Constitution, which are then submitted to referenda for change. All the while the mantra of the Constitution being outdated is repeated from every quarter and, as referenda pile one on another, the notion seems to be that the people will so tire of the practice that they will be willing eventually to accept a once off complete change. Yet the American Constitution has more or less worked adequately for the purposes which it was designed, although it is considerably older than our own, and efforts to make any changes to it meet stiff resistance sometimes from the most unlikely persons.

If a new Constitution were to be enacted, given the persons who would be assigned the task of formulation, the new form would undoubtedly be dreadful in every way. It would most probably include various United Nations provisions of wide implication, in addition to European Federalist ones already in place. Most importantly, it would definitely finalise the argument over the primacy of Parliament as against the primacy of the European Institutions over the natural rights of the people. It would have to be opposed both in the course of a referendum and, if passed, thereafter be opposed in the name of nationhood as such. This is an unavoidable situation insofar as so much has been given away to Federal Europe already. It is only the very naive who believe that there is anything currently held worth holding on to, as opposed to the need to re-acquire those things immorally, if not illegally, forfeited.

The place to take this stand is not, however, on the ground of the 1937 Constitution, but rather on the much firmer ground of a philosophy of Constitutional

Government as such. We need to enact a modern Constitution having regard to modern circumstances, but understanding that the most striking of those modern circumstances is the growing appetite of government, through the legislature, to draw to itself the prerogatives of individuals as a free people, and the prerogatives more properly left to the nation as against Federalist usurpations.

The breaking of the Civil War mould is, therefore, the task of our generation in a much fuller sense than is meant by party politicians seeking an easy cliché or punch line. It is the task of leaving behind many of the assumptions of that generation, while learning the very real lessons of that experience. Government in Ireland has for too long been exercised as a conspiracy against the people, and an effort to keep the herd in line. The rise to power of the traitors in the Free State Government, only to be replaced by the worst and most venal element of the Republicans at end of that first period of independence, made the current situation perhaps inevitable, but not necessarily enduring. *It endures only so long as we permit it to endure.*



Democracy or Republic?

As with most things, there is very little you can fail to know about a government system if you know first how it came about. Knowledge of its origins will generally amount to knowledge of the thing itself, insofar as the intended purpose of its creators will be revealed and a great deal of the workings as well. An understanding here will tell you a lot more than the widest awareness of current events, since they are likely to involve a lot of things which, for the personal motives of the participants, are kept hidden from public view.

In the last chapter, we touched upon the question of Constitutional Government, both in principle and with particular emphasis on our own. More useful in that primer, however, was to get to know the characters behind the various events of that time as an accurate gauge of what they might have intended and, thereby, the likely effects of the structures such men might have put in place. We are naturally put on guard as to what such a character as Eamonn DeValera would have bequeathed his adopted country, and we are bound to look again through the achievements of men of the stature of Michael Collins in thinking not only what they might have achieved had their ideas been permitted full fruition, but perhaps more importantly, since it has more than an historical implication, just how much of that legacy has been preserved. An accurate assessment of our current position and possibilities is what we are really interested in, as we delve into otherwise meaningless events in our past.

There arises a broader question, however, which is to say that understanding how much of our present circumstance is bound up with their various achievements and failures, it follows that history did not begin with them or the foundation of the State. They were as much prisoners of what went before as we are today. Specifically, in deciding the form of Government of the new state, they were circumscribed by the mainstream thinking of their day and thus influenced greatly in their actions by the thinking and actions of those who had gone before them. We have noted previously the extent to which this restricted the malign influence of De Valera within bounds which today seem positively good, but only by modern contrast. Although we cannot be sure, we can reliably guess that Constitutionalism as such was forced upon him by the precedent of the Free State.

It is striking to note just how many points of similarity there are between the Irish form of government and the one which immediately preceded it in Westminster. The bicameral chambers of Senate and Dail are clearly based on the British model, though in the absence of an acceptable aristocracy, we substituted a Senate which without similar historical foundation was completely useless, especially as the 1937 Constitution envisaged it, though it might have become the embryo for corporate thinking. We need in our own day to ask very serious questions as to whether this form is in fact appropriate, and whether or not it is time to adopt a model more suited to our circumstances.

Undoubtedly in 1921, it was necessary to pander to some extent to the ingrained prejudices of the British, in giving them to think we intended a form of government within their frame of understanding. Such may well have been sensibly pragmatic at the

time, but surely should not restrict our imagination now. Of course, we must mean here something considerably more radical than merely abolishing the Senate, which is no more than a populist cliché poorly thought out by those who currently throw the idea around.

For example, when the thirteen colonies which became the United States came to formulate their federation, they did so in circumstances radically different from our own, not only in terms of the era but, far more significantly, in terms of their relationship with their former masters. The origin of the rebellion was primarily economic, and they gave in consequence a great deal of thought to economic independence. Indeed, it was their capacity to create that economic independence which gave impetus to the rebellious tendency and that, allied with the natural feature of their great distance from Britain, meant that their need to have regard to immediate British sensibilities was dramatically less than our own. They had comprehensively defeated in the field each of the expeditionary forces sent by the Crown to suppress the rebellion and, moreover, the British knew it. Of course, there was the additional factor that in strategic terms the colonies were less important to Britain after independence than was a neighbouring island like Ireland. Thus for many reasons, and in every sense, the United States had the opportunities afforded for a much freer hand in their own affairs than we had here.

We had not defeated the British as such, merely rendered the country ungovernable. The Crown forces in Ireland, however, were largely in control of the normal apparatus of State. As their immediate island neighbour, Britain's strategic interest here was always likely to remain strong and a particular matter of concern, which necessitated for them the maintenance or the appearance of maintaining some form of control. Many commentators have noted the enormous drain on the British exchequer which Ireland had always been without noting this security aspect; that the subjugated island of Ireland was worth much more than it would have cost had they to take account of the potential need to invade here in any of their Continental expeditions. France, on the other hand, facing the Prussians/Germans on the one side, and the open Spanish border on the other, was never as secure as Britain, and could never in consequence devote quite the same resources to colonial expeditions. Hence the great British advantage, though a smaller nation in population. Ireland was thus the linchpin of the Empire.

Thoughtful British strategy, however, as this century opened was to realise that that strategic significance was very much lessened by alliance with the French, and the decline of Spain beneath the need to be measured militarily. For this reason, and this alone, was the idea of Home Rule entertained at all. Even then, strategic interests required some sort of hold on Ireland. No expenditure of resources by the Empire was ever going to be too much to secure this position, and rational Irish nationalists had to be pragmatic enough to take this into account. From such considerations was the Treaty born; the holding of the ports; the retention of the Oath, etc. More than this, the timely interventions in the internal politics of the new State, to the point even of arranging the betrayal and murder of the Commander-in-Chief.

In this context, it is not surprising to find the original form of the Free State closely resembling the British, insofar as it was inclined to place them at ease with the new situation. Familiarity often breeds contempt, but also tends to breed an artificial comfort with change which appears not to be fundamental.

We need not consult here any moral question as such, except perhaps to regret that our own leaders after Collins did not have such high regard for our national interests as the British displayed for theirs. What matters to us is how transformed the situation was by 1937, and how little regard our leaders still had for the formulation of a form of government more suited to Irish needs, and not the continued poor relation aping of the Imperial model.

Reviewed from this vantage, the vaunted commitment of the new Fianna Fail administration to achieving an essentially radical programme by non-violent methods rings hollow. Apart from ravaging the Senate of all semblance of usefulness, the Constitution lacked a very basic sense of purpose. What was it for? Simply a symbolic triumph over the erstwhile victors of the Civil War, to teach them a lesson in how there was more than one way to skin a cat? More than one way to skin a nation was its effect, leaving us without the prospect from either political party of effecting a really Irish Government in more senses than personnel, but in nature and form.

The timing was perfect in every sense, for achieving what had failed to be achieved in the Treaty and no doubt was intended by the original signatories. The resurgence of German power on the Continent added to the passage of time since the occupation. We could have written any document we wished and there was nothing the British Government could have, or would have, done about it. There were no excuses of yielding to greater force, making the best of it etc. and indeed no such excuses were made. On the contrary, the new Constitution was presented as throwing off the shackles of the previous embarrassing, but necessary, arrangement and taking our chosen place among the nations of the earth - Emmett's epitaph pre-written for the occasion.

Unlike the Treaty, or the Free State Constitution, its authors asked for it to be judged on its merits, unrestricted by outside forces. It is not a pragmatic compromise, but the sum of their philosophy. It thereby stands terribly condemned. The 1937 Constitution is a betrayal of the principles of Constitutionalism as such. It is a document designed to copperfasten the primacy of Parliament; the artificial structures of the Parliamentary form; the denial of the liberties of the people as citizens; and, in general, a confidence trick of smoke and shadow.

That it did not need to be so we have already established. More significantly, it was not even likely to be so given the background of Republican Irish nationalism, imbued with that distinctive feature of Catholic thinking, which might have given us something which, if not perfect, might well have been the closest thing to perfection possible within the framework of human weakness. We must look back further, to the origins of how the opportunity was missed.

In 1649, there was an effective end in Ireland to the notion of an aristocratic nationalism. The power of the clans, which had gone through so many permutations in the previous centuries that it hardly had the moral or practical force to lead an independence struggle, now lay completely broken - its personal embodiments flying to the far corners of Europe to return no more. That this may not have been their intention makes no difference. That is what happened. English and Protestant power was established, unchecked and unopposed throughout the land, and would remain so.

The Protestant nature of the new ascendancy is important, because this feature was probably singly responsible for much of what went on later. In the first instance, it meant that a deep wedge was driven unalterably between the Irish and their ruling class. It would not prove possible to integrate the new arrivals as had occurred with the Normans and others previously. The wedge had so clear a demarcation, so closely related to such vital integrationist tendencies as intermarriage, that it took on a character of some permanence.

The extreme poverty of the Catholic peasantry, held in subjugation by the newly landed gentry with which it had nothing in common, ensured that thereafter there would always be a strain of class politics involved in Irish nationalism. This has occasionally had disastrous consequences. The Socialism of the modern Sinn Fein, which is largely taken for granted, would probably have been unthinkable otherwise. It certainly would not have been the foregone conclusion that it subsequently was.

Its other feature was to rob the Irish people forever of a native aristocratic leadership, and to associate concepts such as Crown and Monarchy with the foreigner and with occupation. No such association ever formed for, say, Polish nationalists. As a consequence, the notion of Monarchism in principle is not alien to that people, and has resurfaced again in that country as a mainstream, if not particularly popular, proposition. In Ireland, this could never be the case. Regardless of whether an agreed candidate might be chosen, the fact remains that no Irish nationalist would ever again wear, or seek to wear, a Crown. The struggle carried on against the English Crown placed us in sympathy with the struggle against crowned heads everywhere, and Republicanism was thenceforth central not only to thinking about Irish independence from Britain, but in general the Irish nationalist view of developments elsewhere in Europe.

In the nature of those developments, unaffected by Ireland's particular circumstances, they were a long time in reaching fruition. While with hindsight, it may be obvious that the fate of Ireland would be linked with these continental and inter-continental developments, it was not immediately so. For many long years after the final destruction of the native ruling class, it seemed like nothing except the permanent sufferance of domination and humiliation were inevitable and unavoidable. However, the American and French Revolutions were bound to have profound influences on any reawakened striving for independence.

It is important to understand the relative influence of these two strands of the Republican tradition, which might have turned out the happier had the former been more influential. As events occurred, however, the strategic importance of Ireland drew the attention of the French Republicans. They conceived the notion of using Ireland as the springboard of their efforts to undermine Britain, their most implacable and successful opponent in their continental endeavours. From the opening of the Revolutionary period onwards - and even through Napoleonic times - Ireland played a great role in the thinking of the French. Irish revolutionaries spent much of their time thinking about how French interests might run parallel to ours in ousting the British from this island. All of which might have been relatively harmless had the Irish taken a detached attitude of simply using the convergence of interests and had not instead become deeply imbued with French revolutionary ideas.

It is difficult to find sources for objective analysis of the French Revolution,

and still more difficult to find the kind of ringing condemnations that in a spurious struggle for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" this malignant event actually represented. The grave similarities in both philosophy and action, which it represented as a test run for the Bolsheviks in 1917, are rarely noted. For our own purpose, however, it is vital to understand them because of their influence on public policy in this country even down to the present day.

We may start with some simple facts. Firstly, the French peasantry were not the starving and brutally oppressed multitude presented by Establishment history. The Monarchy, far from colluding in the vicious subjugation, was actually engaged in far reaching reforms. In some senses, it was really these half completed reforms which gave rise to the revolutionary circumstance, since they tended to weaken central government before a solid alternative was in place. It was certainly true that several of France's monarchs had behaved abominably on a personal level, and several disastrous wars - most especially the French-Indian War fought with the British over Canada - had drained the Treasury.

The French aristocracy, however, was not nearly so dissolute as it has been portrayed. Certainly it was much less so than its British counterpart. The King, while theoretically autocratic, was bound by precedent, a deep sense of Catholic responsibility, and generally acted with restraint in the exercise of those powers. Had he not done so the Revolution might have been easily crushed. His position, therefore, was very unlike his Prussian and Protestant counterpart, Frederick the Great, whose autocracy was absolute, and who never once had to concern himself seriously with revolution.

In fact, Louis had done much to restore the reputation of the Monarchy. If it was not at an all time high in popularity, it was certainly not edging inevitably towards the uprising of an outraged people. It required not only the ruthless manipulations of various conspiratorial factions, but a curious series of circumstances which allowed each conspiracy to feed off the successes of the previous one to cause real trouble for the Ancien Regime. Certainly the nobility were no aid, combining as they did with the factions - one thinks of the attempted coup by the Duc d'Orleans - as well as showing a monumental lethargy in responding to changing times. Of course, there was the tremendous unpopularity of the foreigner, Marie Antoinette, and the scurrilous stories spread by the conspirators, though she appears to have been innocent enough.

While one could devote many pages to the defence of the basic decency of the Ancien Regime, this is not necessary. What is important to note here is that the Revolution, far from being the spontaneous outburst of the oppressed masses, was largely a manufactured event with some of the rioters of Paris having been paid agitators. The primary instigators and consequent beneficiaries were the Masonic lodges, who bore great hatred for the Monarchy and an even greater hatred for the Catholic Church which held a privileged position within the old order. This is important to know, because it gives us an insight into the characters behind the Revolution, and thus some idea of the kind of new order they would desire. The French Republic was Masonic in spirit and personnel, and the disorders and anarchy which flowed from it were hardly an accident. It was not a noble experiment gone awry, but the calculated result of many years planning.

Without delving too deeply into the machinations of these men, we can see the inevitability of the Great Terror which flowed, not from panic, but from the Socialistic doctrine of its originators, much in the same way as the same Red Terror flowed inevitably from their ideological cousins in the so-called "Russian" Revolution of 1917. We can see how the free imbibing of the spirit of that revolution was to carry its poison into Irish Republicanism. The French Revolution was not a rebellion against tyranny, but rather a Socialist assault against authority in all forms and tradition, particularly in the Catholic form. The strain carried itself over to Ireland more or less intact in that form. This is why we find that Republicanism, imbued with Socialist thinking, has remained with us to this day.

Naturally, this world view was carried into the form of government with which they sought to replace the Monarchy. The principle of that governmental form was Democracy, or in modern language, the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is important to understand that the revolutionary leaders, both theoretically and in practice, were devoted to this principle above all else. The sloganeering was about "*Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*", but since how a thing is enacted is as influential as the thing itself, the means they had chosen was democracy, and it characterised their actions as well as the formal criteria of those actions.

It is difficult for the average person to understand today just how dangerous the unlimited application of this principle can actually be. Like many things, we have attributed meanings to the words we use, which are inaccurate and conform more to what we might wish them to be rather than what they are. Democracy is all the more dangerous in its unlimited application, because it is possible to adopt the idea of such a principle, and yet remain detached from the logic of what its absolute application might mean.

For example, one clichéd response from liberals that is guaranteed an outing at every referendum is that the measure of a democracy is how it treats its minorities. On the contrary, nothing could be further from the thinking of pure democracy than the question of how minorities are treated. The very briefest thought suffices to reveal this. It cannot take any account of minorities, because its foundation is on the will of the majority. Indeed, the only manner in which minorities may be catered for within the democratic form is to the extent that they are able to excite the sympathy or support of the majority, in which case for practical purposes they have ceased to be a minority. Thus in the most common Irish situation, the only way for Protestant thinking to be catered for within the democracy is to appeal to the Catholic majority to grant something in the various names of pluralism, compassion etc. Of course, no such possibility has ever arisen, since those who have the power to excite such sympathy merely use a combination of secularists and weak-willed Catholics to create a majority around the idea of the lowest common denominator in religious terms. The result is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but secular humanist. The cliché is therefore merely a device for manipulating the majority.

It remains true, however, that no rights exist, no power is exercised, and nothing takes place without the consent of the majority, whether that consent is by mere acquiescence, or manipulation, or plain trickery. The philosophical foundation remains at the heart of the democratic form that the will of the people, which for

practical purposes is determined by the expression of the majority, is the decider of all issues. Pure democracy rides roughshod over any and all minorities, and in countries where the system is institutionalised in elections, the magic 51% (or even 50.1%) has the right to enact its will pretty much as it pleases. If you are shocked at such a notion, it is because you are not a democrat. If you still think you are, it is because you misunderstand the term and are really applying your own wishes to the word. This is presumably where the confusion concerning Democracies and Republics arise, not between what they are, but what people perceive the words to mean.

If, as noted in the previous chapter, the modern State requires that democracy be expressed in representative form, then the question far from being obscure and academic is one of the most enormous import. The manner in which decisions are made obviously has a profound impact on what those decisions are. The whole direction of the life of the nation careering outside the understanding and evaluation necessary for sound thinking clearly is a matter of great concern. We might go further and say that the central theme of the country's future rests on this choice: *Democracy or Republic*. To have that completely or partially misunderstood by the man in the street is to place his future outside his control, no matter how many elections are held or how many votes he casts.

Most people clearly express an attachment to an idea of democracy, which is not found anywhere in the form believed, and which is probably impossible in fact. If we are to direct the destiny of the nation according to the will of the majority, does that mean that we are willing to sacrifice the interests of minority opinion entirely? It is of little use to claim that the majority does not in practice do this. On the contrary, majorities regularly impose their absolute will, as Northern Ireland proves. If we are to claim that the Stormont Assembly, as it stood pre-1969, was fundamentally objectionable, are we not really saying that democracy is fundamentally objectionable? Quite frankly we are. This being so, very few people are really willing to follow the democratic principle to its logical conclusion.

In practice, democracy in a homogenous society like the Southern State rarely reaches this logical conclusion, since majorities shift their composition regularly so that no individual feels himself always on the losing side. This does not, however, address the central problem of the potential for tyranny at the heart of the democratic idea.

For Nationalists, the difficulty in understanding both the nature and significance of this issue is further compounded by being so very clearly in the majority on so many issues; yet having the normal course of their democratic right frustrated by the liberal dominated institutions which have sought to use the principle only when it was suitable for their purposes. We are inclined to think that because, say, on abortion we are denied the opportunity for democracy that it is the absence of democracy that is the problem. It is not, and in the longer term the Nationalist Cause might well rue the day it took up that rallying cry as the mainstay of our agenda.

An obvious flaw in the thinking presents itself precisely here on abortion. If the majority are now in favour of a complete prohibition being added to the Constitution that might suit very well, but suppose they were not? Suppose that the majority were to favour not only limited abortion but abortion on demand, and that they were to insist in similar campaigns to our own, that a democratic vote be held? Would anything

of the essential nature of abortion have changed? Would abortion have become right by virtue of a majority vote? Obviously not, and yet we pin our whole philosophy to this masthead. Just less than one half of one per cent altered the legal definition of marriage in Ireland forever by removing the prohibition on Divorce. Is it any more right now than it was then? Obviously not. Yet we have concentrated our argumentative fire, if not our own thinking, on the undemocratic procedures of referenda. We have not thought about how it might be utterly wrong *in principle* to have the question placed to a vote at all, particularly one subject to fluctuating temperaments and changeable at whim.

That the institutions of democracy in Ireland have flouted the foundations on which they are based, sometimes in outrageous fashion, has tended to blind us to the fundamentally corrupting nature of the idea in principle. We have accepted the absurd, which is that majorities determine truth - which they do not and cannot - and wondered only about manipulation.

Democracy like government itself is something of a tool to reach a specific goal - in this instance, an acceptable decision-making process by general agreement on the rules of how that process shall function. We cannot have violent revolution on every public debate, so we have substituted this form. Support for it in that general sense does not, however, preclude understanding the limitations to be placed on democracy in order to avoid tyranny.

Tyranny in this understanding arises not where a government is chosen by means other than an electoral one, but arises essentially when a government steps outside its appropriate functions and delves into areas which belong to the citizen's privacy as of right. The essence of tyranny is its totalitarianism, not in the methodology of its totality.

We can see that if the functions of government were specifically and rigorously limited, it would not much matter even if that government were unelected, chosen from the ranks of a class within society, or by straightforward dictatorship. Such a government, howsoever chosen, and whatever the predilections of those involved, is never a tyranny because it is functionally incapable of the totalitarianism required. In the life of the citizen, the less the government is capable of impinging the less it matters by whom or how that government is chosen or controlled.

There can be no effective alternative for the protection of the basic freedoms of a nation, because without such limitations every government will give way to the natural human tendency to use those powers available to it. In practice, it may well be that the best intended can often do the most damage, since they see the faults of the world more clearly, and seek to remedy them by what means are at their disposal. In reality, those problems are not always solvable by government, but it is possible to wreck havoc trying.

If we are to take up any solid ground, then surely it must be on the acceptance of human imperfectability, and the acceptance of the right of the individual within limited scope to make his own mistakes; to succeed in his own way or to fail and try again. What is a truism for private enterprise is true of all human endeavour - that freedom is often the freedom for failure, but that in the longer run and the broader generality, it is the best way. Otherwise, and by virtue of democracy, we impose the most appalling dictatorship conceivable - that of the weight of numbers, vying against personality in a perpetual endeavour to find the lowest common denominator.

In reality, the extent to which democratic principles are flouted in Ireland is not nearly so striking as we might imagine, having regard to certain key issues of concern; namely what is commonly referred to as the moral issues. While the various political parties have sought to manipulate public opinion, sometimes in the most outrageous fashion, it remains nonetheless that they have often been bound to take note of it. More importantly, the very worst things done in this country have been done with the wholehearted support of the majority. It makes no matter whether we claim that that majority was ill-informed. Majorities invariably are, and this will always be the case. We are shying away from acknowledging the simple fact that the majority is not only not always right, but is seldom so. Thus, submitting the freedom of the individual to the will of the majority is in principle wrong in itself.

What we have created is an elective dictatorship, whereby the powers of government are theoretically unlimited. The ballot box is the citizen's last individual act where he consigns himself to the collective, and loses his freedom of action over much of his life. Moreover, it may be seen through the campaigning of various lobby groups that a profound psychological change has occurred too. We no longer believe ourselves to be free citizens with rights and responsibilities, but rather petitioners of favours from central government which, being representative by virtue of having been elected, is then the dispenser of power and privileges.

Just how damaging this notion is to society in general is difficult to measure with any objectivity, but certainly it is from this that we get the appalling effects of clientelist politics. It could not be otherwise within the system we have chosen for ourselves, because it is the only way that such a system can work.

Of course, it is egalitarian *per se*. The only check being put on its absolute application is that the general public instinctively understands the absurdity of equality in the French Revolutionary sense. However, this was not the case at the time and much suffering, not just for the aristocracy, resulted from a deliberate dumbing down.

Much of this had to do with the circumstances of the French system. As noted, it was primarily a revolt against privilege and, in practice, whatever the rhetoric, this came to be against all privilege, earned and unearned alike. It was inevitable that the governmental form would act against the creation of new privileges - earned or unearned. In this case it marked a profound obstacle to personal achievement and freedom, since it is among the characteristics of freedom that, both financially and socially, some will gain more than others, and inequalities of status and positions will develop naturally. Democracy thus conducts a running battle against freedom, since the majority seeks to claw back to itself the privileges gained by the individual through the exercise of his freedom.

We have been fortunate that the theoretical principles of these ideas have not had total application, and that the majority has generally remained sensible enough in understanding that certain inequalities naturally exist as a requirement of civilisation. However, the counterbalance has often been the Christian and especially Catholic informed conscience expressed in the Commandment not to covet thy neighbour's goods, and elaborated at some length in Church teaching. The running battle against this foundation of sound thinking has been growing apace as well, so that the mere mention of an equality agenda is enough to put the sensible person on guard that something dangerous is being planned.

Irish Republicanism did not, however, have to develop in this way. At certain points in our history, the possibility that it might have taken another route was more likely than possible. Specifically, insofar as the American Revolution took place before the French, it might have been supposed that its principles would have had greater influence. As with the French Revolution, the rebellion in the Thirteen Colonies arose out of the specific circumstances, and the governmental form chosen had as much to do with the causes of the Revolution as the motives of the revolutionaries. They were, however, very different.

The social structure of the New World was entirely unprecedented for a European, colonial endeavour. Unlike the earlier Spanish and Portuguese expeditions, the English had colonised the Americas in the very real sense of a significant population movement. Thus, whereas the efforts in Central and South America had established a tiny European ruling élite to exploit both the natural resources and native peoples for their own purposes and those of the Mother Country, the North American experience was vastly different. In the first instance, since the English had arrived as settlers rather than conquerors, they had come both male and female. There was consequently almost no intermingling with the native populations in the North, and they sought to create a new civilisation in a European style on the new continent. Just as importantly, however, were the opportunities for personal aggrandisement at very little personal effort afforded by the Spanish and Portuguese empires, which meant that they brought with them the class structures of Old Europe. They transplanted them directly to America, saving only that they added a new underclass of native on a slave level beneath all Europeans. North American settlement offered no such easy pickings. Consequently, no-one came from Europe for whom life in Europe was pleasant, or even broadly speaking tolerable. As such, there existed in the Thirteen Colonies a form of rough equality without ancient privilege and the clear recognition that whatever a man had here, he had clearly earned here.

It was never likely that a revolution in the colonies would be founded on the resentment of hereditary privilege, which characterised the situation in France. In fact, the colonists primary objection to British rule was founded upon the economic stringencies imposed by a Mother Country seeking to exploit the efforts and achievements hard won from this frontier land. There was a solidarity of shared struggle to wrench a civilisation out of the wilderness, which left the growing class politics of Europe obsolete and meaningless.

Moreover, the manner in which that struggle with the wilderness was conducted lent great weight to the importance of individual action and endeavour, and imprinted firmly the principles of individual independence with familial dependence as the first resort on the minds of the new Americans. It was individual families who were the homesteaders, creating on the frontier a rough and almost totally independent existence, relying on central government for practically nothing, and expecting in return that central government ask them for very little. Following the collapse of French colonial endeavours in North America in the French-Indian Wars, the colonists reliance on British soldiery for defence ended and, with it, the last sense in which the colonists felt they needed Britain at all. Curiously, the British sought to weigh ever higher taxes on the colonists at precisely the time when they felt least obliged to pay them. The revolutionary atmosphere was created.

These were the cardinal features of the society which became rebellious, and they were to show both in the governmental form they gave themselves and in the general attitudes which underpinned it. The Founding Fathers of the United States feared not the British Government so much as government *per se*. Experience of George III and his parliament had convinced them that all government was the engine of tyranny: "*He governs best who governs least*", as Jefferson put it. The newly freed colonies were no more willing to place the individual under the tyranny of the majority of themselves than they were the foreign majority of Britain. As a consequence, they devised a constitutional form suited to a people determined on the substance, as well as the appearance, of personal liberty. They did so with the characteristic practicality of a frontier nation, which harboured no more fantastic illusions about equality than it did grievances against hereditary privilege.

There are certain elements of the United States Constitution thus enacted which are wholly peculiar to the circumstances of that nation, and are not therefore applicable in any general sense. Its Federalism was born of the competing interests of the previous colonies, now become States of the Union. The bi-cameral legislature is related to these competing interests rather than modelled on the imperial forerunner. However, the grand idea is more universal in that the fundamental nature of the new Constitution was the desire to restrict and restrain democracy rather than allow it what might be a dangerous free rein, or indeed reign. For in doing so, they had created in a much more meaningful way the Republic, which was mere rhetorical shadow in France. Although commentators have often drawn the two revolutions as parallel developments, this is not the case. In fact, the American Republic was probably closer to the French (and Catholic) monarchy in its working, and the French "Republic" closer to the British supremacy of Parliament and Crown.

None of this is to proclaim the perfection of that document for that nation, or recommend it for our own. Rather what we mean to recognise is the validity of the underpinning concept before thinking about how its failings might be rectified. For the American Constitution was, and is, in many ways profoundly flawed. It was bound to be so for precisely the reasons why it existed, namely the peculiar circumstances of the founding of that new nation. It was above all a Protestant nation at its inception, and though occasionally holders of high office were of distinctly religious bent personally, the concept of religious neutrality in legal matters took hold of America from the start. Not only did this commit them to the doctrinally false notion of religious liberty, which from a Catholic perspective, seeing as they were then a tiny minority, was on balance probably a saving, but it went further in excluding the possibility of grounding its Constitutional principles on the only firm foundation; that is to say, the theological formation which underpins Catholic Social thinking derived from the reality of being the One True Church.

That error was to have profound consequences, almost all of them negative. They are too many and too involved to detail here. Suffice to say, that in accepting the flawed nature of even the most perfect humanly inspired government, it points us clearly to the alternative form: the creation in human terms of government inspired by God. This is not a flight of fantasy. It must be done with all due regard to the

frailties and weaknesses of our fallen nature, and therefore forthrightly practical. It must be done largely in the terms which have been set out by the Church.

For if the American Constitution sought to preserve personal liberty from democracy, it gave little real thought to preserving humanity from its own weaknesses. It endangered its own principles on the exaggeration of that liberty. It had failed to ask itself and, consequently, failed to answer the real question of freedom, which is not, as it is so often mistaken to be, freedom *from* but rather freedom *for*. In defying the King and his government, and transferring that understanding to a general reluctance for any government, they understood well enough what it was they wished to be free from, but never quite grappled with what they might positively do with freedom. Until this century many factors - the general maintenance of decency by Protestants, the large influx of still traditional Catholics and the inherent character of the people - meant that they themselves solved that problem personally in a way which was conducive to it being solved nationally. But with the splintering of the Protestant Churches, the weakening of their resolve in the stand for any principles and, of course, the abject failure of any large number of Catholics in the United States to remain faithful, the full impact of that fundamental flaw has become evident. The system itself has no means of holding in check a personal liberty, which so easily gives way to moral lawlessness. The United States was not a Catholic State and however perfected the system, it failed to contain within the substance of some overarching aim of what we might term, the "Freedom For".

It is an error understandable in that time and in that place. We need not make it in our time and in our place. If we have grasped clearly the renewed belief in the True Faith, which is the truthful sword which we carry with us in the political battle against Liberalism, doesn't it follow that if we are to remain true to the principle of Constitutional limitation of government, that within that Constitution, wholly free from legislative interference, must be those principles for which we are fighting? More plainly, whereas some would say that there is no place in the Constitution for the moral edicts of the Catholic Church, they are more than wrong. Not only is that the place for moral edicts, but there is no other place for a people which does not wish its liberty to be filched by democracy, nor exaggerated into moral anarchy.

For just as there are some inalienable rights granted to the individual by virtue of his humanity, regardless of the will of government or the decision of democratic votes, so too there are rights which society holds over the individual but which have been shown, when exercised by government, to be tyrannically employed. The Constitution is the proper place for the elaboration of those Rights and Freedoms, as well as the place for the enunciation of the concomitant duties of citizenship. Where there is such a balance, there is Order; where there is Order, we find the grounding for that true and lasting freedom, which is bound to God in the relationship appropriate to creature and Creator. It is not claimed that this is a perfect way, only that it is infinitely better than that which we have, and better even than the very best we have seen.



The End Of The Party System.

If we are serious about a fundamental rewriting of the relationship of Government and People in this country, we must be equally serious about rewriting the nature and workings of government itself. We will be engaging in a constitutional experiment of sorts, though the phrase is used advisedly insofar as it has not previously been attempted. The risks are few and minor, especially when compared to doing nothing at all. It will simply not do to leave the experiment untried because of a failure of original thinking, or by a kind of nervous conservatism which fears to take things to their logical conclusion. In truth, this is the greatest danger.

The practical implications of the theoretical power of government is, and has, been generally recognised though seldom explicitly so. As a consequence, people have found their own ways to obstruct the ultimate extension of any tyranny which might arise. If the current constitutional arrangements are something less than a free people might deserve, we have sought by various expedients to ensure government is not free either, as a kind of stop gap measure to prevent the very worst from happening. Thus, tyranny in Ireland has been exhibited in more petty forms than, say, in a totalitarian dictatorship. It has inflicted upon individuals grievous wrongs, but with that clumsiness which accompanies systems ripe for corruption and overthrow. It has been incapable by nature of truly “systematic” endeavour of the negative or positive kind. In other words, as a substitute for free government, we have given ourselves clumsy government, where the opportunity for the meanest of corruptions ensured its staffing by the lowest types intellectually; the consequences of which we rightly believed were better than the despotism which might otherwise have resulted. In short, the government, which possessed dictatorial potential insofar as the absolute powers available, was at all times too grossly inefficient in its workings to effect the dictatorship of a totalitarian kind except here and there, now and again. With the intervention of the technocrats of the European Union, however, that potential has been increasingly realised and can no longer be ignored.

Just as surely, when the constitutional issues of liberty have been firmly and lastingly addressed, it will not do to have the powers of government exercised in so haphazard a fashion. Inefficient and corrupt administration may be, and is, preferable to raging tyranny, but having satisfied ourselves that government has been sufficiently chastened and restricted behind the firmest of legal barriers, against interfering in the private affairs of the citizen and freely created associations of citizens, it follows that such ineptitude need no longer be tolerated.

Thus the contemplation of a more fundamental constitutional reform than that currently envisaged by any group, Left or Right, opens up dramatic new possibilities to clear away the hubris of Establishment failings. It makes possible a

form of administration which genuinely embraces the principle of coupling responsibility with authority, and authority with responsibility. No-one can seriously believe that this is presently the case. In fact, the institutions of the State have been designed to shield the administrators and decision-makers from ultimate responsibility for the folly of their own actions. Had this not been so, it is unlikely that the System would have survived its many failings. Rather it would have collapsed under the absurdity of its own misdeeds.

What we mean here is to draw attention to why the various governments of each party were able to persist in policies, which had obviously long outlived any practical usefulness; and why it is that in all the various disasters which these policies have led to, no single person had ever been brought to account for their personal role. It will not do that the temporary resignation of this or that Minister, only to return a short time later to another department, amounts to accepting responsibility. Accepting responsibility means accepting the fullest consequences, which means at minimum the end of the political career of the character involved. The system, whereby it is impossible to determine exactly who it is that exercises authority over any given matter, has protected by force of numbers the acceptance of responsibility. It is not "practical" to blame the whole party or the whole of the Dail for any action, save by admitting the need to do away with these institutions altogether. Until now that seemed too radical an option and probably still does for the majority, but the time is coming when the disaster will be so magnified, and the desire for a complete break so great, that it will seem a petty enough thing to have rid of the institution which has wrought so much damage.

Most Nationalists, while undoubtedly noting the dreadful condition of public life in contemporary Ireland, have probably never given much thought to the idea that it might be something more basic than bad character and its inflated influence in this or that Dail. But if you follow the logic, we can see a little more clearly that just as there is much more than the right to life at stake, and just as the problems have originated much further back than is commonly realised, then the causes must equally be much more fundamental than this or that individual. While it may be comforting to believe that the solution lies with the removal from influence of those individuals, this is simply not the case when the environment for political success is itself responsible for producing characters of this kind.

True, our knowledge of the historical and contemporary circumstances of any other country may be too limited for a definitive judgement, but we may say this much for certain: that parliamentary government is foreign to the Irish people, was imposed by a colonial power, and is wholly unsuited both to our needs at any time, and especially at this time. Though it may recommend itself as a limitation upon the individual who might otherwise exercise excessive power, it has little to recommend itself in a truly constitutional regime where such questions of limitation have been firmly settled, and the requirement is to arrive at efficient and useful administration of those powers which are available to government. At this point, it is worth stressing that Parliamentarianism and Democracy are not the same thing, and the establishment of one is not necessarily the establishment of the other. It is important to remember, since parliamentary government is most effectively defended when it removes the

argument to the question of democracy, which has nothing whatever to do with it *per se*. That is to say, when recognising the enormous potential for tyranny at the heart of the democratic idea, it does not follow that the solution to those problems lies in replacing it altogether - for in replacing it altogether, the question of *what with* has always arisen. While many intelligent and genuine persons have made the case for various alternatives, it has always seemed that they did so in a vacuum of their own intellectual making, without following the natural consequence to its logical conclusions. Those logical conclusions briefly being that whereas it is perfectly possible to imagine a benign and beneficent dictatorship and, consequently, both efficient and fair government without the voice of the people being heard on the matter, such things are unlikely. If such a character, or an oligarchy of characters, could be found who were so selfless, so capable, and so determined to rule well, just as surely such characters might be ruthless, incompetent or possessed of any number of other vices and yet take effective control. During the Middle Ages, for example, which is rightly remembered as the great era of Christendom, there were many saintly Popes who were at once great spiritual and temporal leaders. However, we have also lived to see a Joseph Stalin as well. The principle of any proposition stands upon the generality not upon the exception. That is our mainstay against the liberal propaganda of the "hard case" on so many matters. We need not dwell on this point, since the reader is unlikely to have given any serious thought to a dictatorial form of government, and the argument is not therefore about that. It is mentioned only to underline the fact that, in tackling the failings of Parliamentarianism, the opponent must not for a moment be permitted to hide behind the shibboleth that what we intend is a dictatorship. Rather we seek a workable form of democracy, which the current system most definitely is not.

In France, the demise of the Monarchy lay in the turmoil leading up to the Revolution, and the Parliamentarianism of the Three Estates played as a powerful weapon in the hands of various conspirators. However, since that revolution was primarily socialistic, it may be argued that this tells us very little about the nature of a system which might have been better. It would be more useful, therefore, to consider its origins in England, which proudly boasts that Westminster is "*the Mother of Parliaments*". It is all the more appropriate since it is from Britain that we have received the dubious inheritance.

Picking such a point of origin in an evolutionary process is difficult, but most historians are inclined to agree on the signing of the *Magna Carta* on the fields of Runnymede. Those of us who have grown up with tales of Robin Hood and his band of merry men, battling the evil King John, will readily identify with this first myth of Parliamentarianism and probably be inclined to feel all warm inside. In such a light, the forcible signing of a Charter of Rights which forever restricted the monarch's actions will appear an absolute good. It is nonetheless inaccurate. Contemporarily, John was known as Good King John and was held equally in the high esteem of his subjects, as he was in the low opinion of the feudal aristocracy. What took place at Runnymede was a limited insurrection by that aristocracy, which feared his interference in their exploitation of the common peasantry. The Charter was not of rights for the people, but rights for the aristocracy. Foremost among these was the freedom to do pretty much as they pleased with the commoners of their

estates. Thus was seriously delayed any efforts at reforming the feudal system of landlord-centred ownership. The representatives of the aristocracy would thereafter be consulted in a semi-parliamentary forum, which was the forerunner of the House of Lords, before the King could act on any matter which affected them. In practice, this meant virtually everything. Parliamentarianism we see then had its birth in the denial of liberty, before any voices were to be raised for ideas so radical as the notion of democracy.

On the face of it, this may not appear to have much modern relevance since the evolution continued all the way to universal suffrage. Yet if we think about it, there is an extent to which Parliaments functioning today have changed little from that principle. The primacy of Parliament still means that rich aristocrats can resort to the protection of the law in defending their interests against the commoner; indeed, some exact tribute which would make a feudal lord blush. It is worth noting, if only to burst the fuzzy warm bubble which surrounds the idea, and deliberately seeks to associate Parliament with the will of the people. This is seldom the case.

In our own time, the opportunities afforded for corruption and folly by governments so devised is manifest. There are very few who would be able to name the 166 incumbents to Dail, and even fewer who could name the 60 Senators. Yet in these hands rests the fate of the nation. By constantly hiding themselves behind the anonymity of the numbers counted in parliamentary divisions, they are enabled to form a kind of public secret, whereby it is possible to be found out but unlikely, and the personal responsibility for any action is diminished to virtually nothing.

Against the argument that we know well enough who the Taoiseach is, or the members of the Cabinet, surely it is not reasonable to hold him, or them, personally responsibility since he acts only through the authority of the majority? After all, how many of his decisions are, rightly or wrongly, framed for the requirement of achieving that majority? Since we assume the need for capable government, how likely do we believe that this is to arise from such a majority? It would be a fortunate nation which could provide even one individual possessed of the desirable characteristics, whereas we attempt to find 226 such persons every four years. Can we really wonder that we do not succeed? If by some chance one such individual was to enter Leinster House, wouldn't he and his value be quickly lost among his "peers"? Isn't it true that every idea which enters such a forum, far from being judged on its merits, must be considered first and foremost in terms of the ability, or willingness, of the most limited intellects to grasp them?

Does the ability to form a majority in Dail Eireann make a statesman, or does it merely make a Taoiseach? Or are we to measure the qualities of statesmanship according to the adroitness with which they piece together one coalition after another? In other words, their craftiness in manipulating the pettiest political transactions. Is it the will of the people when they vote for one party, with the express intention of removing another, only to find such a deal cobbled together and the reality of their vote denied? Is it the will of the people when a T.D. or T.D.s holding the "*balance of power*" dictate terms to the government, sometimes of the most absurd nature?

Does the Minister for Finance know anything about economics, and if he doesn't, *why* is he given charge of the State's instruments over the economy? Does the Minister for Health know anything about medicine, or even administration which might be of some use, and if he doesn't *why* does he control that Department? Is the

Minister for Foreign Affairs a diplomat? Is the Minister for Agriculture a farmer, a food sector businessman, or anything at all which might give him some passing acquaintance with the issues upon which he makes decisions? How can a Minister move from Department to Department and be expected to be equally capable in all? Can you imagine a Minister or even T.D. saying to the Dail that he knows nothing at all about the matter under discussion, and would prefer not to vote on something in which he has no competence? It is of no use to say that these people have the Civil Service at their disposal. They have no means to sift the truth or falsehood of what they are told; no frame of reference from which to judge the information provided. Besides, this is an argument for government by the Civil Service, which is in practice what we largely have; it is also another point *against* Parliament. It is further profoundly fraudulent in claiming a democratic mandate, and all the more so in a system, where Parliament, dispossessed by its own stupidity, is primary and its power effectively unlimited.

All this makes no mention of the prospects for straightforward bribery inherent in the system, and now evident in every new revelation from this 'august' House.

In such circumstances, a person of character finds himself face to face with an insoluble contradiction. He is caught between his own political insight on the one hand, and his moral integrity and sense of honesty on the other. He can play the game to win, by the means by which the game is won, or renounce politics altogether. The system has no use for, and places no value on, a sense of public duty and personal honour. The natural corollary is that every clown and con-artist feels the itch to "play politics", seeing that the final responsibility will never rest with him personally, but with an anonymous mass which can never be called to account.

Contingent upon the semi-workable functioning of this abysmal assembly is the practice of party politics, with its exclusively baneful effects. Just how absurd the party political idea is has been obscured by its clear necessity within the parliamentary process, since without it, it would be impossible to maintain even the semblance of organisation and decision-making within government. Each new measure would require the reforming from scratch of the parliamentary majority without any clear means to do so. In that context, the Party System appears a perfectly plausible means by which to ensure the co-operation of sufficient T.D.s and Senators to enact decisions made by Cabinet. Not that this shifts responsibility from the mass group to the Cabinet, since the Cabinet itself exists only as an expression of their willingness to compromise, but in practice it makes possible some degree of organisation in what otherwise would amount to complete chaos. The dubious honour of creating the party whip system lies with the Irish Parliamentary Party in the last century, in an effort to maximise their influence at Westminster. None of this detracts from the falsity of the premise, and as such the Party System exists to make the best of a bad situation.

No matter how accustomed we have become, it remains strange that such groups within and without the Dail should exist as they do. The notion of an "*official opposition*", for example, is ludicrous and cannot be defended on the grounds of democracy, much less on the will of the people. It is one thing to leave the decision-making in the hands of the chosen representatives of the people, quite another to create an organisation whose sole declared purpose is to obstruct and, if possible,

defeat the government so chosen. Yet we have become accustomed to the rhetoric of the indispensable role of the opposition in defending democracy, which they do by constant wrangling inside and outside Parliament, so as to undermine and ridicule where possible any and all government endeavours. Then there is the swapping of roles, whereby the party is now the government being ridiculed and obstructed, and then the opposition ridiculing and obstructing. In practice, the liberal élites have ensured the placing of some issues "above politics", whereby they cease to be debated in any forum. Thus, the parliamentary system of Government and Opposition serves to make fuss and bother over nothing, while the essentials of national life are not discussed. Nor is the opportunity afforded to the public at large to introduce desired action or reversal, except by the most laborious processes of overturning the whole party structure. *As such, it prevents rather than facilitates the will of the people.*

Moreover, in the nature of the beast, the Party System ensures the rise of the basest of characters, and the system acts as a vehicle for deciding not the great issues of the day, but which parliamentary grouping will plunge its snout deepest into the public trough. The necessity for each party to compete at the polls in individual constituencies has left us with the positively criminal agency of clientelist politics with Members of Parliament, who neither care nor can care for the national interest as such, but must always put constituency interests first. Any T.D., who spends too much time concerned with national issues and not enough chasing obscure local matters, will soon find himself on the outside looking in.

Worse still, the sectionalism to which the Party System gives rise is not merely regional nor even primarily so. Apart from the appalling *Dublin vs. the Rest* divide, we have on the whole remained remarkably free of the urban/rural conflict which scars other countries. However, in recent years, we have seen the emergence of parties who have no real intention to represent the nation as such, but are content with the spoils to be gleaned from a kind of political niche marketing. For example, protestations aside, the Progressive Democrats are a middle income party devoted to the interests, broadly speaking, of that class. They never seriously considered the possibility of having to attract a mass following, and have acted accordingly with broadsides against various parts of the nation from whom they draw no support, and for whose interests they have no regard. This type of political sectionalism is much further advanced in other countries and is truly a menace, but we are "enjoying" here the foretaste of very much worse to come.

All of which leads to the question: *why should the Nation divide itself into opposing camps anyway?* Can anyone imagine a company, large or small, where the Board of Directors would have on it an official opposition, whose function was to oppose and obstruct the Managing Director in his running of the company? If it is so democratic, why are the really significant national issues declared to be "above politics"? Why is it that every parliamentary nation which finds itself at war (as Britain in the two World Wars) dispenses with opposition altogether in favour of grand coalitions? Is this not practical recognition that the process weakens the country and if it is so in wartime, why is it less so in peace? Should any country present two faces to the outside world, creating the impression at least that though an agreement may be struck with the government under one party that this agreement might not hold under another? Isn't it obvious that the people having made a decision on government have a

right to see that decision carried out in practice and that they alone should change the government when they see fit, not some parliamentary cabal which may have contributed a good deal to the failure of government policy while denouncing that failure?

It has been said that this system is the worst form of government except for all the others, and that expressed in some form is the likely reason why most people are inclined to condone even its worst excesses. This is simply not the case. It would be to make poor account of ourselves as a race, if human government found this to be its pinnacle. Though again reminding ourselves that the fallen nature of man ensures imperfection in all his endeavours, personal and communal, there must be and, of course, there is a better way.

That better way is presidential government. In the first instance, that means the control of real power of action by the executive office. It means much more than that insofar as the principle of presidential government must run through every level of the management of powers not kept sacrosanct to the individual. In all the various associations, which stand between the State and the Individual, we re-affirm the role of the individual by favouring communal action only when characterised by individual, which is to say personal, effort. A leadership which is presidentially applied and thus founded on the individual office holder is the only appropriate means by which the coupling of authority with responsibility may be achieved. The election of the leader is the only means by which that system does not expand beyond the boundaries of the authoritarian, which is required, to autocratic, which is dangerous.

We are faced here with the classic problem of recognising, on the one hand, the inability of the general public to grasp intellectually the many issues with which they are confronted politically (not to mention that even those intellectually capable rarely have the time to ascertain all the relevant facts and place them in perspective), and on the other the impossibility of handing over the destiny of those same people to an individual or small group who, being beyond their recall, may act with either deliberate or unintended malice. In purist terms the problem is insoluble, since more democracy means weakening the intellect of the leadership, and more authority leads to the dangers cited above. However, the constitutional presidential model comes perhaps as close as we may ever come to squaring this circle.

Since the Constitution exists as the repository of the basic rights and freedoms of the people, and those with a width and depth hitherto unheard of in Ireland, these basics are kept firmly beyond the grasp of government in any form. The various intermediate associations act as a further administrative barrier to the potential for unchecked government. As such, it is possible to give into the hands of individuals a centralised power which is very much circumscribed, and be assured that what remains lacks the force to give effect to Caesarian tendencies even if such arise from time to time.

The benefits are enormous. Under presidential government, one individual is elected by the people to serve a specific term of office, during which time, apart from observing constitutional proprieties, he is relatively free to enact the programme for which he was elected. He cannot have resort to the kind of amateurish excuses we are regularly given by party politicians as to why they failed to enact their electoral programme; nor indeed can there be any post-election dilution of that programme to

satisfy the needs of coalition formation. Moreover, and this is the really important thing, that one single individual is possessed of all the authority which government entitles, and is consequently entirely responsible for the achievements or failure to achieve of that government. It will no longer be possible to shift blame onto other shoulders and claim spuriously that no matter what happens that it is no-one's fault, and that no one can be held accountable. Obviously, not all the decisions made will come directly from the mind of the President himself, but they will only have been enacted on his authority and therefore only he may be held finally responsible. As regards intermediate levels of responsibility, it is for him to see that others take their share of credit or blame. In the judgement of the people, however, he is forced to stand alone.

The President will naturally have the power to nominate his own Cabinet, and as such we may expect that this alone will generate new energy and competence in government. No longer will Ministries be in the hands of persons clearly unsuited to their role, but rather experts in any given field may expect to have the opportunity to carry out, under the political direction of the President, the kind of technocratic measures which modern life requires from government. The days of ministers with no knowledge of economics in the Department of Finance will, for example, be over and their replacement with knowledgeable persons will of itself improve the quality of decision-making. Nor is this simply the same thing as occurs now through the offices of the Civil Service. On the contrary, since the technocrat, who is relied upon, is a political appointee, he is answerable as such and cannot merely remain after a disaster any more than the man who appointed him - namely the President.

There is a further bonus in that the very process of electing government can be vastly improved through this system and rendered more democratic, while achieving a more intelligent result at the same time. Since at General Election time the public mind will be concentrated on the one position to be filled by the one individual, such time and effort as is available to them is equally concentrated on the one contest. Since it is always a national contest, there will no longer be the possibility that some obscure local issue will deliver into a key position in government some intellectual dolt to whom no-one has given much thought. In a sense the electorate will not have the opportunity to cast a stupid vote for some candidate whom they would not seriously trust with government, but whom they do trust with 166th of it, on the assumption that there is only so much damage he can do.

The awesome nature of the responsibility placed upon one individual will also have the natural effect of ensuring that only the more courageous would even think of stepping forward to the position. The very fear of taking on such far reaching responsibilities will scare off the ignorant and the feckless. To the objection that there is no means to prevent mistakes being made, well, there is no means to prevent mistakes being made now. The thing is that at least someone will be accountable, that someone can be definitely identified and removed. In other words, unlike now, change after mistakes, and reparation of them, is possible. We will have something we never had before: *a government which is both efficient and courageous.*

Naturally, the soundness of the principle recommends itself to all levels of administration, those which are centrally appointed and those which arise from the corporations local and national. It is salutary to note that private enterprise has never found it possible to dispense with the primary role of the individual, no matter on

how large or small a scale. If people are willing to stake their livelihoods on the principle, surely it follows their government should as well. That people will quickly be accustomed to a new way of thinking about politics we cannot doubt, and on every level the change will be refreshing and positive.

In the area of such fundamental reform, it may be objected that the general public has no appetite for so dramatic an alteration of things, which occasionally are irksome, but with which they have become familiar. In no other matter is this so strongly the case since very few patriots, disgusted as they are with the current regime, would be willing at this time to contemplate altering the parliamentary nature of government. The problems many believe lie elsewhere and are to be solved elsewhere, whereas this facet of the system needs only minor repairs. That this is *not* true hardly addresses the question of the psychological obstacle the presupposition represents.

It is worth remembering, however, that the timing of such reforms would undoubtedly coincide with the scenario outlined in Chapter 5. As such, it will no longer be an issue of whether there is to be such fundamental change, but rather the form that that change is to take. All of the factors which militate *against* change now will, in different circumstances, militate *for* them. Whereas broad contentment and complacency preserves the flaws of the economic model from close scrutiny, in exact measure the collapse of contentment will re-open old debates and give rise to new ones, extending far beyond the purely economic but centring on them.

There is in that scenario only one certainty: that the Establishment and anything which appears tainted by it will not survive. The grave danger the nation will then face is from the resurrected ideologies of extreme Socialism and Marxism, particularly insofar as the economic collapse will bear all the hallmarks of a vindication of Marxist analysis of the inherent flaws of Capitalism. It makes no difference that it was St. Thomas of Aquinas, who was among the first and was definitely the most outstanding critic of some of these central flaws. The general public, in the rush to judgement, is more likely to remember the alternative in socialist terms. In those circumstances, a revolutionary atmosphere will prevail, and it is conceivable that the idea of a socialist dictatorship could capture the imagination of many.

Nothing of the Establishment's legacy, either ideological or structural, would grant to the successors the means of fending off that great catastrophe, and for want of it, a purely economic disaster which might have found economic solutions may well give way to unimaginable horrors. More than once last century, European nations have fallen beneath greater horrors on less dramatic pretexts than this coming time will see. Any person, defending any part of the Establishment's ideology or structure, will find themselves counted the fool in the same manner as they are now lauded.

Parliamentarianism is thus a dead idea walking. *The vital issue is whether or not freedom in its true sense dies with it.* If this is not to be the case, then there will urgently be needed strong minds, strong voices and, perhaps, even strong hands to rally the Nationalists and the Patriots. ***Our task is to defend the Republic.***



The Moral Imperative.

If Pope Pius XI was prescient enough to note, in the great encyclical *Quadregessimio Anno*, the need for a revolution in both public and private morals before the true potential of the ideas contained within it could be unlocked, how is it that certain Irish "conservatives" continue to the present day to ignore this most obvious fact? At the time of writing that document, the Venerable Pontiff surveyed a very much better world in the Catholic moral sense than we do today. He saw, nonetheless, the impossibility of imposing a structural solution, however well thought out even in the profoundly structure-based relationship of the various forces, within the purely materialistic sphere of national and international economics. Catholics today, however, are wont to devise structural solutions to every problem and neglect the imperative, which is a moral one. It is not that the structures of modern life are flawed, even though much attention has been paid to these flaws in the previous chapters. Nothing in that analysis, however, precludes the same understanding - *namely, that nothing we propose has the slightest possibility of success outside a concomitant moral renaissance.*

The Catholic Church, however, has always had the wisdom of realising that, while moral values are essentially an internal and personal matter, they are greatly affected by external factors, and that the duties of the State include providing for the moral welfare of its people in equal, if not greater, measure than their material welfare. Material deficiencies can be made up over time, and have no eternal consequences. On the other hand, moral deficiencies uncorrected may damn the individual to Hell, and the nation to corruption and disasters which no outward show of wealth can long defy. The State must then foster the atmosphere of moral sense. We came to this question in reviewing the Constitutional issues, which arise for the new millennium as a means by which the State might do this without thereby introducing the governmental power into every aspect of peoples lives. It must be obvious, however, that there are limitations to how this can be effected by Constitutional law. Very much more is required.

What we mean here is to follow the logic of limitation of government to its proper conclusion, in realising that the moral health of the nation, no more than any other aspect, cannot be legislated for. It is a favourite cliché of the liberals though, of course, they mean something very different by it than would any decent man. People cannot be made good by law, this is true. It does not follow, however, that we leave them alone to be bad. It merely means that it requires more than government or political action to effect moral goodness within a nation.

Unfortunately, we live in a time where the proper role of the Church in this area has been abandoned by the institutions of the Church in the most appalling way. In part, this has followed on the cowardice of many of the clergy, right up to the hierarchy, who have a terrible fear of being subjected to media abuse. Recent scandals in the Church, concerning paedophile priests among other things, have silenced the

moral voice of the clergy on national, politico-moral issues. The clergy now show a palpable fear of commentary on any question, where they are not practically guaranteed the support of the Liberal chattering classes, since this is the only means by which they will avoid having reference drawn to the scandals in order to quieten them. Very few people are naive enough to believe that the scandals, which have heretofore been revealed, are anything like the full story. Thus, there is added the fear of much worse or, at least, much more to come.

Furthermore, there is the dangerous extent to which many of the clergy have surrendered, even internally, to the spirit of the times, and become indistinguishable in their opinions and attitudes from the most rabid liberal. Even on the issue of abortion, the fact of a man's priesthood or the woman being a nun, is no longer even an indication - never mind a guarantee - that that person will stand for the right to life and not go along with a variety of exceptions. There is no Pro-lifer in the country, who has not had the painful experience of being on the receiving end of a clerical assault for their defence of the unborn child. Indeed, the only thing which such clerics seem to care about is pseudo-Socialism, which they wrap up in extremely selective and non-contextual quotations from the Gospels. In the Third World, this has been developed by Liberation theology to its logical conclusion: so called "Christo-Marxism". It is little more than a fanciful adoption of certain Christian symbols as peripheral accompaniment to straightforward Communist analysis. The Irish clergy so minded have to have a little more subtlety in dealing with an "audience", which is not so receptive to this nonsense, but in essence there is little to separate them other than semantics. It is to waste one's breath to tell them that such ideas are condemned by all the Popes, including John Paul, since they have long since learned to feign ignorance of papal pronouncement - where they don't actually repudiate them!

What is interesting is that no-one has apparently sought to examine the inter-relationship between the rise of Liberalism and Socialism within the clergy, and the emergence of scandals concerning paedophile priests among other things. In order to conduct such a study, it would be important to trace the matters back very much further than the Second Vatican Council, the so-called spirit of which has so clearly wreaked havoc within the Church. Even Pope Paul VI warned that the "*smoke of Satan had entered the Church and reached up to the very altar*". Even the most conservative of Catholics appears, however, to balk at the idea of inquiring further back, even though the sounding of the first Papal alarm on the dangers of Modernism - the desire to adapt the Church and its teaching to the social 'values' of the world - took place in the pontificate of St. Pius X and was condensed into the encyclical, *Pascendi*. Obviously, however, if we are to trace the connection between moral and theological corruption within the institutions, then it is certainly this far back we must look.

It appears to be that the growing relaxation by the clergy has produced a spate of priests for whom the description "poor vocation" is hardly adequate. What is meant here is to draw attention to the fact that not only did there appear to be a growing number of what we might call "bad priests", in the objective moral sense, towards the latter half of the twentieth century, but the reaction and treatment of these priests by the Church authorities was increasingly at variance with Catholic doctrine.

It is not good enough for the liberals to posit the theory that these priests were protected by Church authorities in an attempt to avoid the scandal, since the Church on many occasions has had difficulties with its clergy, and had generally hitherto reacted in what they would have described as the harshest manner. In other words, the Church had not previously shown such a reluctance to deal effectively with a moral menace within its own ranks, no matter how high that moral menace might have reached. It is only in more recent, and more liberal times, that the argument of *false* compassion and *false* forgiveness might have achieved such a hearing, as to influence the authorities dealing with these matters in the proper way.

It is noteworthy in this context that, howsoever the media might concentrate on the fact that paedophile cases involved priests, they have been reluctant to stress that in almost all the cases cited the abuse has either been homosexual in nature, or included at least some homosexual element. We hear nothing of homosexual paedophiles, even though this fact is considerably more relevant to understanding the nature of the abuse than the priestly status of the abuser. In engaging in child abuse, a Catholic priest is acting so contrary to Catholic teaching as to make such a mild description as hypocrite entirely redundant. However, as a homosexual, his actions are consistent, and might lead the general public to draw certain conclusions concerning that so-called "sexual orientation". That we should have seen a rise in the number of paedophile homosexuals, who found their way into the Church at a time when the Church was in practice steadily retrenching in its forthright condemnation of homosexual acts, might lead the sober observer to note the connection between doctrinal laxity, produced by Liberalism, and the abuse inflicted upon innocent children. No such parallel, however, has been made. So it is made here.

It would seem then that the Church's difficulty in making moral pronouncements in a Liberal society is not weakened by its own position on these questions, but by the extent to which it has failed to live up to such pronouncements as an institution. On examination, however, it appears that its failure has been contingent upon the adoption within itself of this Liberalism, and that it has subsequently been hoisted on the petard of the inevitable corruption that Liberalism induces. The Church is, we are told, in no position to speak on sexual morality having harboured paedophiles within its ranks, but it seems that its failure to enunciate clearly on sexual morality and have full confidence in its condemnations of immorality has led to the influx of these perverts. Surely an institutional Church, which was thoroughly Catholic in doctrine, and coupled with action, would have been a cold harbour for such perversions. As such, it would not have found itself covering up what did not exist at the outset.

If we are honest, we realise that a great number of the clergy in Ireland, as elsewhere, have quite simply *lost the Faith*. Not believing in the spiritual nature of their vocation, they have proceeded to think of themselves merely as part of a material institution. Their vocation, as it relates to issues of obedience and celibacy among other things, appears in consequence increasingly incongruous to them. Yet, even as they have altered in their perception of their role, the centrality of the Church has nonetheless maintained, broadly speaking, the moral positions for which they can no longer grasp the rationale. In short, many of the modern clergy ought really to have

left the Church, but for reasons of obstinacy and/or evil intent refuse to do so, seeing their new role as innovators. Instead of 'modernising' Catholicism, they are seeking instead to change it into something unrecognisable and not at all Catholic. In the process, they are hollowing out and destroying the Faith of the laity as well.

Much of this has to do with the failure of modern seminaries to heed particular prohibitions from Rome and, in many, the most absurd of theological writings, even though consistently condemned, are given wide publication and explored as part of the syllabus. The argument that one has a right to intellectual freedom is justifiable *in general*. What is *never* justifiable is to call the professional ramblings of errant theologians Catholic teaching, when it so patently is not. One *might* accept that the Church has no right to say what we should or should not read, but it is an absurd proposition that the Catholic Church does not have the right to say what is and is not Catholic. If we were to apply the notion generally, no-one would fail to appreciate this. For example, we accept without question that only Fianna Fail has the right to say what Fianna Fail policy is. While we might argue about the correctness of the policy, we would hardly accept a non-member expelled by the party leadership as a valid representative of the party. Yet it appears that any fool can call himself a "Catholic" and claim that he represents authentic teaching, whereas it is the valid Magisterium which is mistaken.

We are fast approaching a time when the word 'Catholic' will, for practical purposes, convey no solid meaning whatever. Just like the situation in many other countries, all and every sort of opinion will be accepted as valid under the heading. It is evident that the Church authorities in this country are unwilling or unable to stem the tide of this process, and that in failing to do so now they have forfeited it for their successors. The consequences are both difficult to calculate and frightening, insofar as they are apparent. Nothing less than the moral future of the country seems to be at stake.

In this context, facts must be faced. The problem is not solvable outside the Church itself, and the development of a moral philosophy, separate from the Church, is impossible without risking error that leads finally to disaster. Since many sincere people seem inclined to believe so, it is necessary to state that it is impossible for a Catholic people to wind their way through moral philosophy, even the soundest of pre-Vatican II traditionalist teaching, without the constant aid and succour of the priesthood as such. What we mean here is to restate what ought to be obvious: *that God Himself ordained the existence of the Catholic Church, and that it is simply absurd to suppose that any part of that institution can be dispensed with*. It is of utmost importance to accept this as being true, since many Catholics are clearly leading themselves and others astray with the notion that the people themselves can remain faithful, without the leadership of a sound clergy, if they read enough or familiarise themselves personally with the traditional teaching of the Church. Insofar as this might be possible for certain saintly persons, it does not at all detract from the reality of the premise that the faithful as a whole will become quickly lost without clear, consistent and uniform guidance on spiritual and moral matters. This is aside from the inherent danger to the Faith from diminished access to the Sacraments, which is also a feature of the modernist tide.

It seems the limited frame of action open to us as individuals in this unprecedented crisis is to seek to support those bishops, priests, and religious who have sought to maintain the orthodox line. There can be little doubt that if courage is sometimes failing, there are very many more of them than is publicly apparent. As with other things in this country, such fidelity takes place outside the glare of media attention and can be missed by those without direct knowledge. We can, as a consequence, become disheartened without reason, and our disheartenment can be crippling to such clerics, who feel themselves without the support of the laity amongst whom the loudest voices always appear to be the most liberal. If we are honest, we will admit that to a large degree we have been remiss in giving this support, and remiss too in standing up to those Establishment figures within the Church who have clearly erred. It is no longer of any use to the Faith to hold errant bishops in too high a regard by virtue of their office, that we are willing by silence to do real damage to the substance of the Faith in the name of obedience. Clearly we should be louder than we have been in supporting those acts of courage which we have seen. We should be loud enough at least that, if we fail to drown out media-sponsored criticism, we have nonetheless made the appropriate commendation which may provoke further such acts.

On a more parochial level, it is no longer good enough to tolerate the use of the pulpit for what have sometimes been the most outrageous of un-Catholic tirades. We are seeking not to dictate terms, but rather to stifle abuse. In particular, the practice, which has grown up in some parishes, of handing over the pulpit on occasional Sundays to secular lobby groups on various politically correct issues, is a striking example of such intolerable abuse. If necessary, that means going so far as to refuse to attend Masses celebrated by such priests. Liberal claims that the churches on Sunday are emptying through the orthodoxy of the priests will be shown for the sham that it is. Surely it is not impossible for any person to take the time to travel to orthodox parishes. It cannot have escaped the notice of any church-goer that some of the abuses which take place on regular Sundays in some parishes, and in defiance of the papal edicts, are such as to come close to sacrilege. We should be willing to harass our Bishops with complaints against such deliberate and repeated defiance. This is not proposed as a solution, but only as something which can be done and should be done. It is a drawing of the line in the sand, so that things that we say are intolerable *in private* become intolerable *in public* practice.

These comments are made in the context of commenting on moral matters, since otherwise it might be mistaken that what we were talking about is developing a non-clerical form of 'Catholicism', which would quickly degenerate into an anti-clerical form of 'Catholicism'. Doctrine, as it were, without form. Clearly, however, there is a crisis at the heart of the priesthood, and it must be confronted by those of us who have genuine regard for the vitality of the Faith. Since it is not a political problem as such, it is not within the remit of a government much less a movement to solve. The crucial role to be played by the laity, however, can easily be misinterpreted. Once has only to look at the liberals within the Church, who see that role in the nature of a progressive replacement or even reversal of roles. The danger lies in the orthodox Catholic seeing the methodology in similar terms, even though the object may be

different. Putting it another way, Liberal Catholicism sees itself reconciling the Church with the modern world. Political nationalism might well make a similar error in seeking to change what is meant by the term "modern world", and then seeking with its limited understanding of the Faith to impose its thinking upon the Church. It is no less flawed.

That said, it is becoming increasingly clear also that our approach, both individual and collective, on questions of moral import has heretofore been limited, lopsided and often wrong in the presentation if not the content. Observed critically, there has been an excessive concern with areas pertaining to sexual morality to the virtual exclusion all others. The effect has been to clear the ground of moral discourse for the most Liberal and Socialistic models of morality, particularly in material matters and especially in economics. Insofar as traditionalists have engaged at all in commentary on such matters, they have either drawn upon the Establishment line, which is un-Catholic, or the Socialist line which is un-Catholic. In this regard, we have dealt to some extent with the flaws in the Establishment economic model, but it is important to note the moral context in which economics ought to operate, and which orthodox Catholics have neglected in favour of the obsession with sexual morality.

This statement is not meant to have the effect of diminishing the importance of sexual morality, nor its complexity in action. Certainly, insofar as sexuality alone has the power of giving new life, the moral questions which arise from it are absolutely vital for the functioning of society and central to the nature of that society. We need neither be embarrassed nor apologetic that they are our first order of priority, for they must be, if we are to rescue our country from the morass into which it has fallen. What is contended here is that there has been the absence of an holistic approach to truly Catholic campaigning on morality, allowing our opponents to restrict our input into this limited range. This limitation has, in the first instance, done enormous damage to our credibility when speaking in moral terms, and secondly has robbed Catholic traditionalists of active champions in the other areas of moral import.

Furthermore, some of those pronouncements in the sexual sphere have been plainly and repeatedly inaccurate, at least if we are taking orthodox Catholicism as our starting point. The quintessential example is what is euphemistically referred to as "family planning". Under this innocuous title, much of the worst outrages in the world are carried out. It is politically protected, enormously funded, and is at the forefront of the undermining of traditional values, if not the very foundations of society. Naturally then, the struggle against the advances of the ideology of family planning are at the forefront of any person's agenda which is concerned with the welfare of society. You would think, therefore, that the greatest care would be taken to analyse this movement and counteract its deleterious influence. On the contrary, however, many of the most orthodox of Catholics have surrendered to the fundamental thesis of family planning, without entering into the argument. It is not surprising then that the argument has been progressively lost by them.

We are, of course, speaking about the various campaigns advocating so-called *Natural Family Planning*, as the alternative to contraception or the even greater horror of abortion. Without a doubt, N.F.P. has much to recommend it insofar as it differs from the other two. Contraception, even where it is not abortifacient, has

opened the door to myriad possibilities of pre-marital and extra-marital promiscuity, which would be unthinkable in its absence. Of course, there is the well documented link between the inevitable occasional failure of contraception and abortion. One could hardly imagine such a scenario arising out of the use of N.F.P., wholly unsuited as it is for the practice of promiscuity. Thus arises the situation whereby the Church has permitted the use of it by married couples in certain extreme cases, while continuing to hold contraception as "*inherently evil*" - that is to say, always wrong in any circumstance. Clearly, there is a difference, and the difference is profound enough to make the one thinkable and the other unthinkable.

However, the difference in effect though important is not essentially a difference in thesis, particularly in the manner in which it has been promoted by certain 'conservative' Catholic associations. N.F.P. shares purpose with contraception in facilitating sexual activity without procreation. It is hardly logical to claim that N.F.P., by using natural methods, allows for the intervention by God to thwart the human will of opposition to conception, since believing Catholics can hardly doubt the divine ability to thwart any human will whatever device was employed if He so chose. Yet despite its absurdity, this is the ground upon which many proclaim its difference. In fact N.F.P., as it has been promoted, shares the mentality of contraception and has only chosen methodology as its distinction. Without labouring the point too much, they both share the anti-child mentality, which is the root origin of the use of contraception and abortion. In consequence, it shares the philosophical error, if not all its practical implications.

Now many astute persons have noted this similarity of purpose, especially those engaged in the Pro-life movement and have rejected Natural Family Planning altogether, choosing to develop their own personal theology on the subject declaring it to be also "*inherently evil*". This exemplifies the danger treated earlier of non-clerical Catholicism, of being so Catholic as to cease to be Catholic anymore. It is not valid and cannot be. For the soundest of reasons, which may not be immediately apparent to us in our own circumstances, the Church has ruled its permissibility in what it terms "*serious circumstances*" or "*grave conditions*". Thus should be ended for faithful Catholics, the notion of its inherent evil. However, is there anyone who seriously believes that the active promoters of the method are concerned with propagating it on these grounds? Haven't they in fact engaged in a wide ranging campaign on behalf of its positive benefits, in allowing Catholics to avail of all that Liberalism provides in terms of childlessness, and to the possibility of doing so with a calm conscience? This position is untenable and not supported by the authentic teaching of the Church.

Sometimes the observer is actually struck by a certain quality in the campaign for N.F.P., which is distinctly disturbing. Among the arguments put forward, for example, by Fr. Paul Marx of H.L.I., is a reference to choosing the sex of the child by virtue of the most modern application of the method. This is surely out of line with the whole spirit of authentic teaching in what we might call the reproductive sciences. There is also within his proposition the dangerously Jansenist notion that N.F.P. provides for a wife a guaranteed period of freedom from her husband's sexual demands. It is difficult not to be revolted by his view of marital relations as an almost predatory

act. Those of us who are familiar with Fr. Marx's writing will note his enthusiasm for N.F.P. is raised to an absurd level, and it is in this *reductio ad absurdum* that the most glaring co-incidence with the contraceptive anti-child mentality may be perceived. A few lines tagged on about how the method may be used to facilitate pregnancy are insulting to the intelligence of any person at all acquainted with the truly natural method of conception, which requires no such belaboured scientific theorising, and no one can really be convinced that it will be used for this.

In reality, this form of N.F.P. advocacy is the surrender position, insofar as it grants the acceptability of deliberate family limitation. It accepts all the liberal propositions concerning the benefits of reducing the numbers of children in any given family and, instead of addressing the fundamental issues of anti-child and anti-family political ideology, reverts to a personal and private solution which is easier to achieve than a reversal of public policy, but perpetuates the problems for Catholics who wish to live according to the authentic teachings of the Church. It need hardly be mentioned that if the end sought is the same as that favoured by the ultra-Liberals, it is almost impossible to argue with them on the ground of methodology.

There seems to be a certain prudishness involved in the language used to describe artificial contraceptive methods, and reference is made to how crude these are - as if that were the Church's only point. In fact, as any sensible person realises, if the only difference were in methodology, then the Church's demand to avoid the use of artificial contraception on pain of mortal sin would be, as the modernists argue, excessively rigid for an apparently academic point. No wonder then, that traditionalists have lost each and every debate on contraception. The time has come to state clearly the Church's opposition is not to so-called artificial contraception, but to contraception *per se*.

It follows that this involves a transformation of the debate on contraception and family planning. Now we are presenting the real opposition, which is advancing the pro-child, pro-family argument against the doctrines of child prevention, which lead psychologically to the child prevention methods of contraception and abortion. Of course, this means taking on the anti-child mentality in the arena of children's rights. We mean here, not the disturbed theorising of "human rights" activists, who pit children against their parents, but the pervasive sense that, particularly in public places, children are an unwelcome nuisance at best. We will, thereby, have started the process of reversing things. We will have in our hands the only weapon, which has the slightest possibility of counteracting what appears to be the 'unalterable' social trend in favour of Liberalism.

One can readily perceive, in the despair of which orthodox Catholics speak of these social trends, a very real sense in which they lack confidence in the thesis which they advance. They lack confidence, so it seems, in their ability to persuade others and in particular the youth culture. They are right to despair. It is an axiom of much of this book that it is both wrong in principle, and futile in practice, to attempt to advance any idea solely on its negative merits. It is this which we say you must not do, instead of understanding the psychological need for people to think about their own lives and actions in positive terms. If, however, we think about the positive advancement of the idea of the large family and an abundance of life in that family through many children, we can perceive the beginning of a philosophy which has a

real chance of success. One cannot doubt that the couple, imbued with the desire for many children, can no more engage in promiscuity. Indeed, this is to do no more than return to the basic reason for marital fidelity - it is, in the first instance, the requirement to provide for the welfare of children. We do so, not by stating the things which cannot be done, but by stating the possibilities. What cannot be done flows logically from this, rather than as a belaboured burden.

All of which brings us, naturally, to a more profound point which cannot be too often mentioned, and where religious people are most at fault, though they ought to be least at fault. It is this: *what is the purpose of morality, whence does it originate, and how are the answers to these questions related?*

The purpose of morality is a broad question, having in consequence a broad answer. For our purpose, however, we may agree to a definition of the question within parameters which allow for agreement, even with those persons whom, from our point of view, advance theories which are profoundly immoral. The purpose of morality is to arrive at code of personal conduct, which permits us to live together as a society. Admittedly, this is a limited answer, but it is one which no-one disputes in and of itself. There are various notions as to how this code may be arrived at and enforced, but this does not change the essence of purpose. Catholics may well agree with this purpose, but in practice proceed in argumentation as if they do not believe it, primarily as a result of answering the second question more correctly than others. That is an irony.

The origin of morality is hotly disputed, and it is this disputation which is the source of the conflict, since it results in the derivation of various codes of personal conduct for societal life. For the classical liberal, the origin of morality is human reason alone. As such, we decide, as a society, on a code of conduct which makes society possible, and enforce it both legally by the use of force *in extremis* and by convention, which is the discouragement of various forms of behaviour by the opprobrium which we attach to such objectionable actions. Since, however, this morality has no objective origin, it follows that it reaches no objective conclusion. It is in a constant state of flux, being moved by the mass will rather than by any facts *per se*. It is incapable of solid substance, since the individual seeks more and more freedom from moral convention and seeks in concert with others to achieve what is really public licence. Society as a whole, though recognising the requirement of moral convention to function, cannot by nature foresee all the consequences of a given relaxation, and tends towards a continuous relaxation regardless of the consequences. The individual seeks to be unbounded entirely. Thus, for basic functioning, society resorts more and more to legality, or to physical enforcement of the basics of morality as convention is undermined. It ends with the confusion of morality with law, whereby the individual comes to believe that nothing, which is legal, can be immoral. The battle for the relaxation of morals moves to Law, where political campaigning subverts the role of objective fact. This too in the longer term becomes undermined, though the fullest consequences of this relaxation have never in human history been realised, because anarchy and chaos have intervened to wreck such societies before they have reached the lowest potential ebb. Legalised abortion, however, is the striking example in the modern world of the philosophical practice of viewing the origin of morality as

human reason. Human will inevitably corrupts over time, giving way to the maximum selfishness which may be politically justified.

Juxtaposed are those who hold that the origin of morality is religion. This group, while perhaps lacking the influential weight of the former, is far larger numerically-speaking. However, it suffers from the multiple choice involved in the simple statement that morality is religious. For our purposes, we are speaking of the sub-section of the group which means by that statement the Catholic religion. In practice, Protestantism in all its form tends to share all the deleterious attributes of Liberalism, and might rightly be regarded as little more than a half way house between the two. Protestantism baulks at pure Liberalism only in the claim of foundation on Scripture. It carries with it, either the democratic vice in, say, the Church of Ireland, or the personal vice in other Protestant sects. In any case, human judgement with the specific rejection of divine inspiration, engages in the study of Scripture, drawing from it a very wide potential for false interpretation. Hence, the proliferation of the sects. Of course, it would be absurd in the Irish context to consider in any detail the non-Christian religions, since they have no practical application to Irish moral norms, even if that might soon be altered by the immigrant influx.

In taking the Catholic religion as the one true religion - a fact as well as being the most useful judgement point - a very different picture of morality emerges. In the explicit claim of being the one true religion, it follows that the moral teaching of the Church lays explicit claim to finding its origin in the Will of God. Liberal Catholics aside, this has been, and remains, a central tenet of Church teaching. The moral laws and conventions thus derived owe nothing to human reason, and are not subject to its fads and fancies. The morality thus founded is unchanging and unchangeable, and specific pronouncements in specific circumstances are always drawn from the same frame of reference. This is to say that they remain consistent one to another. They are, of course, un-democratic insofar as they are God's Will and not our own, and they do not tend towards gradual relaxation and corruption over time. They are the only foundation upon which a reply as to what is the purpose of morality can be adequately answered. The oddity, however, is how so few Catholics actually seem to realise this.

To hear some Catholic advocates, one would begin to think that they agreed with the Liberals in viewing such moral laws as being the purely arbitrary dictates of God, which He imposes as a kind of test of fidelity; the passing of which is required for entry into Heaven. The liberal in rejecting God rejects the dictates, the Catholic in admitting God sees the requirement of obedience, but still seems to obey as if they were dictates. This is not to say that this is a universal view, but it does seem that many do take it. For example, those who pointedly refuse to argue for Catholic morality on secular grounds, proposing that to do so is somehow a fundamental infidelity to God. They seem, in accepting that morality has its origin in God's Will, to ignore the question as to *why* it is God's will.

It will be apparent, however, to any person who examines the human, which is to say secular, consequences of a morality not founded on Catholic teaching, that almost all human misery flows from the failure to heed God's moral laws. This fact finds a profoundly secular expression and comes home to the victims, often even the

perpetrators, regardless of whether they personally are religious. In fact, secular argumentation for Catholic morals is where we reach out, in terms of visible and verifiable phenomena, to those who are heedless of anything which even resembles a religious point of view, but who are at least capable of grasping the truth of the cliché that facts are stubborn things.

None of us can place ourselves in God's position when considering such matters as the purpose of morality, but in the observable consequences of disobedience, we can perceive at least the outline. Isn't it actually obvious that, far from being an arbitrary set of test rules designed to sort out in arbitrary fashion those destined for Heaven and those for Hell, morality was/is intended as a sure guide to the avoidance of inflicting human misery. The Church's pronouncements are the elaboration of the means by which to do so. In these circumstances, why should Catholics dispute the efficacy of secular arguments for religious convictions, when such secular arguments are part of the reasoning for God's Will expressed in the temporal sphere? Shouldn't it be possible to see the enormous potential for actually enacting much of what we believe in a presentation, which while certainly not denying its religious origin, does not demand its acceptance on Faith alone, since the observable facts clearly support the case? Doesn't it seem that, insofar as we neglect to do so, we are accepting the liberal tenet that religion is essentially irrational? The opposite is true. *Religious conviction adds force and depth to the heights which human reason can reach, and takes us even beyond what human reason can reach.* Put another way: the Faith is not separable from fact, but rather is the means by which we reach a greater knowledge concerning the nature and purpose of the world, and the nature and purpose of ourselves as human beings, than we could reach left to ourselves.

Take, for example, the question of pre-marital sex. On the face of it, human reason has suggested that in and of itself, there is nothing wrong with it, particularly insofar as we grant the right of the individual to personal liberty in all decisions not relating to non-consenting parties. Hence the phrase "consenting adults", by which the Liberal seeks to justify all and every act, even the most perverse. The faithful Catholic, while he would not generally propose to make the act illegal and thereby punishable by law, nonetheless holds the moral conviction, which in the group setting becomes moral convention, that this is a personal 'liberty' which it is fundamentally wrong to exercise in practice. Why? In purely theological terms, it has been ordained by God that sexual activity is reserved for marriage alone. In truth, however, we are still left with the question: why? Observable fact shows that, whatever may come of each individual act, the broad generality is one of unnecessary misery produced by the satiating of momentary passions. We need not go into much detail except to cite broken marriages and divorce, dysfunctional families, neglected and abused children, delinquent teenagers, abortion and, of course, the myriad individual traumas, which do not register in statistical form, but of which we are all aware. Now surely human reason, through religious perspective, in observation of the perceivable phenomena, is capable of reaching the conclusion that it is His most perfect anticipation of what we know, and also what we cannot know, that the Almighty set the prohibition. It was in order to avoid the consequences that He laid down the *order* rather than, as we said before, some arbitrary test the passing of which gains Heaven.

Can there be anything fundamentally wrong in pointing out the secular phenomena in support of the moral law? If there is, then it is a fault we might well find with all the learned Doctors of the Church, not excluding St. Thomas of Aquinas, who engaged in what some might call secular apologetics.

It is perhaps even clearer, if we steer away from the discussion of purely sexual morality where, if we are honest, the issues are sometimes confused by the prudery of the moral advocates. Again, if we are honest, this is the reason why these other areas of morality have remained neglected. For example, an opposition to contraception, which does not encompass a broad pro-child mentality, seeing the large family as the positive ideal, is nothing more than prudish puritanism. In the interests of calling a spade a spade, it should be confronted as such, and removed from the lexicon of Catholic and Nationalist argumentation.

The sound efficacy of a moral sense is, on the other hand, unarguably manifest on a matter without this complicating factor. Take, for instance, theft. In the strictest sense, the secular function of the prohibition of theft is beyond dispute, and it will hardly be claimed by anyone that it exists arbitrarily. The example is particularly interesting, because it is from this vantage that we can review most revealingly the comparative efficacy of the two doctrines of morality. We can view the sustainable nature of the religious as against the degeneration of the humanistic, for while both are in agreement on the necessity to prohibit theft, the latter has shown itself completely incapable of effecting a control function on individual or group behaviour; whereas as the former, without doing so perfectly, nonetheless did so to a much greater degree. It is more probable than possible that the latent force of religious moral sensibility is even now a force holding back a tide of veritable anarchy. Explain? The collapse of societal convention on sexual matters might well be explained by the positive championing by influential forces of the libertarian model, but how are we to account for a rise in theft, which runs in inverse proportion to the status of religious devotion? Surely, since the two moral codes are in agreed opposition, then the liberal code has an opportunity to display the potential of a world founded on humanistic values through showing *how* crime can be eliminated.

In reality, not only has the Liberal ethic failed to eliminate crime, but the elevation of the individual has been noted by many as an contributing factor. Insofar as this ideology has pushed the State at the expense of intermediate groups in society, it has also handed some areas of life into individual autonomy, which ought more properly to belong to these intermediate groups. Thus, we have on almost all things the individual and the State and, in assaulting the foundation of religious convention, the State has been forced to take responsibility for the actions of errant individuals set loose without a moral compass. In particular, it has fallen to the secular Right to call for more police, more prison places, greater police powers and tougher sentencing. ***It will not work.*** It ought to be obvious that it will not work, but that it will be tried is certain. On the Left, we see the murmured notion that society ought to be more lenient, not as a solution *per se*, but in recognition that it is society's fault that the criminal sees no other option than crime. One really has to wonder whether we are witnessing the beginning of a campaign for the decriminalisation of theft.

Most sensible people have no doubt that the secular Right has a point in advancing the case for tougher action at least in the immediate sense. Persons and property want, need and have a right to be protected, and since the current regime is inadequate in achieving this, a new one must be tried. On the other hand, the Left have a cruelly ironic truth. To a great extent, society has failed the criminal, though not in the way that they mean. Society has failed the criminal, and bears a large part of the responsibility for the suffering which it receives at his hands, because it has fundamentally failed to teach a worthy moral code. In short, the number of people involved in crimes of all sorts has spiralled almost exactly parallel with the numbers of people who no longer have any firm notion of the difference between Right and Wrong.

There is no point in noting that the Liberal agrees with the laws, which make these things crimes, and that he would quite freely tell anyone who asks that these things are "wrong". The simple fact is that he has no basis for making the assertion that, for example, theft is wrong, since by his own admission this is only his personal opinion. In other matters, does he not proclaim: "*we all have a right to our opinion*". The criminal's opinion is, in Liberal philosophy, no less valid. It is only less widely held. Indeed, we are fast approaching a time when even this assertion may no longer be true, since increasing numbers are possessed of all the fundamentals of a criminal mindset, held in check only by legal consequences. We must surely begin to ask ourselves seriously if the equation of crime with poverty and disadvantage has more to do with the calculations of personal advantage, which for the majority still makes a case for remaining within the law, but for those who cannot succeed by normal means crime is an alternative "career".

Religious sanction, though an imperfect control on criminality, insofar as individuals have always been available to break with any convention, functioned as the single most effective deterrent against the menace of all forms of crime. For faithful Catholics and Christians of all denominations, theft was, and is, wrong not because of the risks associated with it, nor indeed through recognising the inability of society to function otherwise. ***It was wrong in and of itself.*** In short, wrong even where there was no possibility of being caught. We are caught in the very act of thinking about it, since God is omniscient and certain to be punished since He is omnipotent. Indeed, as regards religious sanction, it is hard to escape Voltaire's famous phrase: "*if it's not true, it's well invented*". It is impossible to imagine a greater force of deterrent, and so even a false religion would perform this secular function, as it does in many parts of the non-Catholic world. Naturally, here as elsewhere, the Catholic prohibition on theft is not subject to debate, is not a matter of opinion or of human will, but of the Will of God to be enforced in the last judgement. It is also subject to St. Thomas's injunction that error has no rights.

In the end, it is futile to advance the notion of the legal solutions, either to crime or other societal problems, where it is obvious that those tempted for personal advantage to create those problems will refuse to recognise the validity of such laws. Sheer weight of physical force, exercised by the State in support of such laws, will not have anything more than a palliative effect on a growing problem. It does not follow, however, that such laws ought not to exist. It means that these laws need a firmer foundation than the sanction of a majority vote, or the declaration of the finest intellect.

In fact, we are merely coming round to the inevitable and original declaration of this chapter, in recognising that what is required is a revolution in public and private morals. Specifically and politically, this demands the abandonment by the State of the specious doctrine of separating itself from the Church; which only means separating itself from objective moral authority, and its duty to enforce that authority with the physical authority of the State. It follows that those who exercise the authority of the State must be themselves of the highest character available.

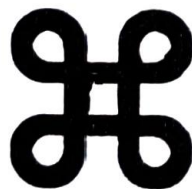
Naturally, we must be careful here not to lead the State into assuming the function of moral guardian for the individual. We would do well to note that essentially the State is limited to that which can be legislated for, and that this hardly includes all that is desirable in the conduct of interpersonal and group relationships. Thus we would not make illegal all of those things which we believe society to be better off without. But it certainly lies within the power of the State to support such things as it cannot itself actually do, and to recognise that the conscious undermining of morality must cease. It can consciously recognise the role of the Church and the doctrines of the Church in that moral guardianship, which is beyond its remit.

In the end, however, the problems of morality which have profound political implications cannot find political solution. Neither the State, nor any purely political movement, can of itself create the circumstances; nor is it a matter to be left to the individual. Rather the support and fostering of religion in ceremonial practice, as well as moral enactment, can only come from the people themselves, but the people formed together in associations for the purpose. In former times, many such groups existed for the various purposes of what we might call *Catholic Action*. The closest modern equivalents still working are such organisations as the *Legion of Mary*. One cannot help but feel, however, that the doctrinal formation of these groups is often quite poor and, while possessed of the utmost of genuine desire to serve the divine plan for the world, it is evident that the efficacy of the methods is very questionable. It is not so much a matter of the wrong thing being done, but the failure to follow through with, as it were, the whole story.

Even in the broad Pro-Life Movement, however, there is the dawning realisation that the general collapse of moral formation in the population as a whole makes even the most practical and secular of efforts increasingly difficult. The banefully inadequate knowledge of the Faith by the laity is producing some very real problems. **Task Number One** is clearly the deepening of our own knowledge. **Task Number Two** is to carry that knowledge into every corner possible. The neglect to undertake these tasks by many of the modern clergy is no excuse. We ourselves must do what we can. In this instance, there is the further benefit that knowledge is confidence, since the truths that the Faith teaches have never been more evident than they are today. We will learn through trawling even the most dated of Church documents just how accurately the consequences of any given social action were predicted, and cannot fail to realise that the consistency of such accuracy must have its origin in more than the highest intellectual reasoning. Thus, we can have the greatest confidence in the declarations of the Church on matters which are still anticipated, or those remedies which have yet to be tried.

In this regard, the acquaintance of every lay person with the majority of Papal encyclicals from the last two centuries cannot fail to be beneficial. In particular, those engaged in Catholic Social Action, whether in the Pro-Life Movement or other, must make such reading a priority. It is too easy, even with the greatest intellect and the soundest of motives, to contribute more to the problems of the world than their solutions - while engaged in the *ostensible* remedy. A consistent feature of the Church's teaching is to treat the matter holistically, which is to say, having consideration for all the factors as well as all the potential consequences. Inadequate preparation through inadequate knowledge is not pardonable in an era which, for all its evils, has seen at least the clearest enunciation of the "right way", if only we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. If nothing else, we will learn to appreciate just how limited a view of morality the excessive obsession with sexual morality actually is and, while we can hold a firm line in that area against permissiveness, we will learn not to fall into the error of puritanism.

Not all problems are moral problems, so not all the choices we face as individuals and as a society will have definite conclusions. Certain decisions we face have more than one morally licit option, and they are open to debate on these grounds. Having said that, it is increasingly obvious that many of the choices which society and individuals have made, particularly in the last century, have had profound moral consequences, though very few were astute enough to understand this at the time those choices were made. Not so very long ago, those voices of caution were like St. John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, and almost without an audience. The subject of moral choice, however, has never been more relevant as the consequences of Liberal excesses become ever more apparent. The case has never been stronger, and will grow stronger yet for making a firm moral foundation the imperative in all that we seek to achieve.



Ireland In The World.

When Jacques Delors made reference some years ago to the need for a united foreign and, by implication military, policy for the European Union, for the purposes of *"the resource wars of the Twenty First Century"*, he was clearly making a statement of enormous importance for the world as a whole, but in particular for the members of the Union. The consequences for a country committed to neutrality are obvious, but the obsessive concern for neutrality as a principle tends to cloud the real significance of the statement. It is certainly a diversion from serious questions as to what he actually meant.

It was, of course, the neutrality lobby which hit upon publicising the statement in the first instance, and consequently it was they who put the spin on it. This lobby, with its large left-wing contingent, is notorious for regularly missing the point, their virtual domination of the *"No to the Single European Act"*, for example, being disastrous. They reacted in knee-jerk fashion to draw conclusions, which were patently absurd and thus effectively blunted the importance of Delors's uncharacteristic candour. Their ideological interpretation was that the Commission President was speaking of using European military forces for the suppression of troublesome areas in the Third World, and that this would be done to assist Capitalist exploitation. What made the thesis plausible was that it contained an element of truth, insofar as the military forces of a Super Power, like the European Union, would be used just as the forces of the United States have been, and are, used. What it does not explain, however, is the disproportion between task and means. The requirement of European military unity for any violent purpose is suggestive of a great counter force, capable of putting up such a determined and capable opposition, that limitation on European effort might bring defeat. In short, this suggests the opposition of a power of comparable size, which would itself make a united effort. The idea that such a power exists in the Third World is absurd. In fact, the armed forces of most of the individual European countries would have it easily within their capacity to intervene in almost any situation in any part of the world were their perceived interests to be imperilled.

Part of the reason why we fail to think immediately on this fact is the unfolding of the Gulf War. The lengths, to which the United States went in order to create a common front in the enforcement of so-called international law, seem to mean to some people that this common front was somehow necessary in the military sense. It was not. It was a political decision by the U.S. to involve the so-called Allies. It had more to do with public opinion than anything else. The cynic might even say that it was a matter of sharing the blame. What it most certainly was not, however, was an indication of the need for a united effort to defeat a comparable force, as was the case with the Axis and Allied Powers in WWII. Iraq was typical of the kind of "threat" which we might expect to arise in a volatile region, and in no sense can they be said to have posed a significant opposition once the guns began to fire.

It is implausible too to suppose that Mr. Delors was engaging in hyperbole for public consumption and spoke of the need for great military force against an unlikely foe, in order to justify the great force itself. If that were the case, he would have chosen his words more carefully, and spoken of some potential threat rather than a "resource war", which suggests national interest or supra-national interest. In other words, the phrase used, and the context of its use, do not give credence to the notion that it was any kind of public relations exercise. If it was, it was a spectacularly blundering one. No, we may take him at his word. What then?

Unfortunately, the whole question revolves around matters of a geo-political nature, which is not a central theme of this book. However, our baneful association with the European Union and with the United Nations has more than once drawn this country into matters which are not really concerns of ours. It is a consequence of the imposed Global Village ideology, that small nations like Ireland and their citizenry must consider issues of geo-political significance as matters of life and death. Thus, when Mr. Delors speaks of fighting resource wars, he means you, your sons and daughters much more than he means himself.

Somewhere along the line, the only lasting contribution to Irish affairs by Eamonn De Valera - namely that of the policy of neutrality - has got lost in the nonsense about high moral ground and the search for an ill-defined "peace". The original, sound logic of the idea has gone missing. Though first adopted in the Second World War, there is nothing about the idea which has lost that soundness if we think about it. The firm basis was the notion that, whatever the intention and whatever the motivation of our leaders in taking sides in international disputes, the simple fact is that whenever great powers contest on the world stage smaller powers *always* lose. This is invariably the case, no matter how high the moral standpoint of any of the great powers. Quite plainly, they cannot allow their judgement to be skewed, by having regard to the needs of small nations even where they accept that they perhaps ought to in all justice. For example, even having regard to the enormous evil represented by the Soviet Union, it was nonetheless the wiser policy to stay out of the conflict while it was possible to do so without a serious weakening of the Western cause. To do otherwise would have been to expose ourselves to grievous dangers.

The policy of neutrality is being gradually abandoned as a result of our membership of various international organisations. It is not that the Irish people haven't noticed, or that they are particularly happy about it, but they have acquiesced. The primary reason has again been that the perceived economic benefits of membership in these organisation outweighs any qualms we might have about elements of plans contingent on that membership. It is highly interesting to note, however, that the changing nature of the arguments for neutrality, away from what were essentially arguments for the national interest and towards a nonsense about 'peace and love', has coincided with the major push to ditch the neutrality principle. Those who are inclined to take the perceived economic benefits are not so stupid as even to weigh this sentimental rubbish as against the solid reality of prosperity. Who can blame them?

It has seemed to many that, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the threat of Irish soldiers being required for military service in the field is quite small. There

seems, therefore, no real reason to maintain a principle at great cost when the principle has lost its function. They hear the statement by Mr. Delors; they hear the neutrality lobby's analysis; and they see the Gulf War. Put it all together and it seems like Mr. Delors is over-reacting. He means the end of neutrality, but the force of which he speaks will never be needed. So there is no purpose to opposing its creation, is there?

This is small-minded thinking, since our view of any action must be to have regard to *all its possibilities*, not simply the likely ones, and to have regard to changing circumstances. The general public rarely considers such things, but then it is not their job to do so. It is the function of the nation's leadership, and it is they who bear the responsibility for the failure to think long term.

Coming back to the point about the geo-political matters, we need then to consider what it is that this force to be created by the European Union might be used for, and how our country is being fitted for its role. Thereafter, we have to ask ourselves whether this is a role with which we are comfortable, and if not, what we intend to do about it.

Clearly the intention is to pit this force against a comparable one. That comparable force is not only a military or political competitor, but also an economic one, hence the reference to resources. The only power which fits the bill is Red China. The suggestion is not made lightly, nor is it based simply on the single statement of the former Commission President. It is founded on the extent to which the theory matches, not only the statement itself, but the facts of the developing situation throughout to world. It is also linked to the historical precedents for similar events. It is, therefore, a high probability based on facts.

Consider this. A major theme of this book has been the extent to which economic questions, and the private interests of wealth holders and controllers, have been the primary cause of political action in the Western world over the last half century or more. We have generally seen the United States, as both the economic power house of the West as well as its foremost military power, bear the brunt of forceful actions throughout the world against a variety of opponents. Generally-speaking, the aim has been the protection of the economic interests of persons and corporations, which wield great political influence in the United States. In considering the economic aspects of the Cold War, we saw that not only was that conflict fought for those interests, but that the greatest boon for them was the ability to consume economic production passively, which would otherwise have created a crisis in the Capitalist West before the end of the Sixties. What was not developed in the nature of the economic analysis was the political factors which went to make that up. In other words, what the thesis suggested is that the United States and the West generally needed the Soviet Union to bolster the military-industrial complex, which was staving off economic collapse.

If this appears to bear some similarity to the hundreds of fictional conspiracies, played out in so many films and novels, it is not a point against it. Rather it seems to indicate that many people were vaguely aware that something like this scenario was inevitable. *If there were enormous profits to be made from military production, then it was inevitable that the persons making those profits would seek to protect those profits.* That's not really a conspiracy theory. It's simply good, capitalist business practice.

The role of International Financiers, who were clearly ultra-capitalists, in providing the funding for the Russian Revolution now becomes more comprehensible. In other words, there is a form of brotherhood between Communism and Capitalism, in their strictly materialist view of Man and the world, and there is a concomitance of effect insofar as both systems have led inevitably to the accumulation in a few hands of practically all the wealth. Such a philosophical brotherhood, however, fails to account for the level of co-operation between the two. Surely the financial power houses of the West must have had cause to worry whether they personally might have their fortunes confiscated by a Communist regime, even if that did not mean a fundamental change in the nature of economics as such? We look elsewhere for an explanation of this.

It can only be that there never was the real intention by these persons in supporting revolution in faraway Russia to see that revolution spread to the United States. They must have known that buying their influence with the Bolshevik Party, through such financing, would ensure control of the beast. But if they did not believe in the spread of a world revolution, why get involved in the endeavour at all? Why not exercise their considerable political clout in America to see to the strangulation of Bolshevism at its inception? We have only to see what happened to see why. The approaching crisis of Capitalism, which is inherent to its false principles, is obvious most of all to its practitioners. When we see the inevitable staved off through the consumption of production by an arms race, we can only assume that this was deliberate. In order to justify it, however, there *needed to be* a substantial enemy, a plausible threat which had to be staved off by military means. In the absence of militaristic Japan or fascist European powers, the Soviet Union served the purpose.

The only problem was that the Soviet Union was not a fundamentally sound entity, and could not have sustained itself as a plausible threat without considerable covert aid from the West. Hence the function of the American Communist Party and the curious behaviour which it exhibited. So curious a behaviour did it exhibit, that many doubted whether Senator McCarthy could possibly be right about the numbers and level of influence which the Party held in the governing circles of the United States. It seemed that if this were true, why did they not arrange an American Revolution or at least facilitate a Soviet invasion as many American anti-Communists said that they were planning to do? Simply because that was not the role and function of the American Communist Party. Their role and function was to exercise that covert influence to protect the interests of the Soviet Union at key moments, when the Soviet system might have collapsed through its own internal contradictions. This protection was not designed to ensure the victory of the Soviet system, merely its maintenance. Like their Russian counterparts, the American Communist Party served the purposes of, and was largely funded by, International Finance.

Conservative Americans, on the other hand, were given a surprisingly free media hand in times where it was clear that a major increase in military spending was desired. Liberal administrations invariably ended with some kind of move forward

by the Soviets, which had to be countered. It is noticeable that, even while there were various attempts at detente with the Soviets over the decades, at no time has there been a reduction in military spending. This is true even under the administrations which have been decidedly "dovish". It is even true of the Carter era.

Naturally, this policy of setting the Russians up in a mock battle for world domination required a great deal of bluff and bluster. However, reality bites, and while the threat from that quarter was often grossly exaggerated, it nonetheless had to exist as such. Communist ideology, however sporadically employed, was at the same time crippling the Russian economy, and with it their capacity to fund the kind of armament production which would justify the panic for the American public. At one time, the Soviets were spending fully 25% of the GNP on their Armed Forces, while the United States never exceeded 7% - though the U.S. was spending considerably more dollar for dollar. The collapse of the Soviet Empire was the result of what is known as ***Imperial Overreach*** - namely the taxing of real wealth for expansionist aims to such an extent that the real economy of the Empire cannot sustain the process. Nor could there be a serious reduction in that taxing, since that would have resulted in a concomitant reduction on the other side, which was unthinkable. Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts at perestroika and glasnost were probably a belated attempt to do just that, but the reforms were far too slow in coming to stave off disaster. Talk of "people power" and other such nonsense need not be taken seriously as a factor by serious minded people.

At the present moment then, the Capitalist system is facing the most critical period in its history. It has already outlived its natural economic lifespan by several decades, as a result of its practitioners ability to wield the kind of world-wide political influence necessary to throw developments off their natural course. In the chapter "*When the Music Stops*", the likely scenario in this event has been outlined as briefly and as completely as space allows. However, we reach again the juncture of Economics and Politics, for if we can see the inevitable development of a crisis, it is not beyond the Establishment of International Fiancee to see it also. It follows that they were always unlikely to allow events to take their course, while they still possessed the power to effect another delay. This brings us neatly back to China.

There is an old saying: "*if it ain't broke, don't fix it*". The collapse of the Soviet Union has thrown up major problems, but it was an extremely successful counter-measure while it lasted. The question poses itself as to whether it might be possible to do the same thing again. Strictly speaking the answer is no. The Soviet Union did not commit suicide, as some unreconstructed Communist and Russian nationalists would prefer to believe, but rather it collapsed from exhaustion. No government in Russia, no matter how belligerent, could possibly take up that race again. If that were possible, the Reds would not have stopped running when they did.

Nor is it really possible for the United States to keep up the race for much longer either. It emerged from the Cold War as the winner, only insofar as it was able to carry the unsustainable burden for that much longer than their opponent. Even now, as they maintain the pace against such spurious threats as Saddam Hussein, the strain is showing. Eventually the U.S. will be forced to retrench or simply collapse as

well. The political flexibility afforded the U.S. by its form of government means that, unlike the Soviets, they will have room for manoeuvre.

Against this historical backdrop, we have seen a number of interesting developments in recent times. China has over the past two decades, and with increasing rapidity, sought to ditch the more economically crippling aspects of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The embracing of the "free market" has not, however, been accompanied by a relaxation in the centralised power structure of the Communist Party, which suggests that the lesson of Russian attempts at reform have been well learned. In consequence, China has taken massive steps forward in material terms, without substantially altering the autocratic powers available to government. With increased prosperity in the grip of the State, there has come about the possibility of funding a rapid expansion of the Chinese Armed Forces, a development which seriously threatens the whole Pacific region.

Patriotic American writers and commentators have sought to draw attention to the growing danger which Red China poses in the aftermath of the Cold War, but their pleadings have fallen largely on deaf ears. Even the clear evidence of monstrous human rights abuses has not moved the American or Western publics in anything like a fashion that would provoke policy changes toward that country. That policy is a more than favourable one, particularly by the United States. China has sought and held "*Most favoured nation*" status as a U.S. trading partner, even though that status is designed for especially needy Allies of the U.S. The liberal party machine has been quick to stress the importance of opening up China to U.S. investment and trade, in order to open up the country politically. It has even had the audacity to make the case in terms of the vast Chinese market, which would be available to American business. The facts, however, are different. The Chinese have run a massive trade surplus with the U.S. since the early Nineties, and it is clear that the only money being made by Americans from that vast market is being made by companies, which have deployed themselves within China. The political effects of the opening up process have been worse than negligible. In reality, the Communists have grown more aggressive toward internal dissent, especially since the Tianamen Square massacre. There is clearly another agenda.

Similar noises about opening up Russia were made in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, and the world was told that granting Russia an equal place at bargaining tables, economic and otherwise, would help to normalise the situation in that country. Stalin even announced, to the chagrin of some of the more doctrinaire Marxists, the policy of "*Socialism in one Country*". With hindsight the idea was a disaster for the West. The sole purpose was to allow the Bolsheviks time to consolidate and build their structure so as to advance the Revolution from a more powerful base when the time came. So it is with China today. They are gaining valuable aid and investment, and building the kind of economy capable of sustaining a power struggle at least in the Pacific region which they have the potential to win. Chinese leaders speak of developing normal relations with other countries, and we are told they will eventually become a nation just like any other. World Revolution centred on China we are assured is absurd. *Déjà Vu* or what?

There is considerable *prima facie* evidence that the Chinese have been systematically engaged in the purchase of influence in Washington through campaign contributions to both the major parties and to individual Congressman and Senators, though most striking of all has been their involvement with the White House administration of Clinton/Gore. Such contributions are, of course, illegal but that has not meant that they haven't happened. Naturally, the largest share of the spoils have gone to the Democrats, because their taking a dovish foreign policy stance will seem less incongruous and raise fewer eyebrows. However, it is clear that more than straightforward bribery of key individuals is involved, so massive a project is the assistance which the Chinese have received in defiance of common sense.

The United States is nurturing the viper of Chinese Communism, the consequences of which will be felt before long. Some analysts believe that the waiting period is only a matter of a couple of years, and that with the addition of Hong Kong, China already possesses the economic dynamo for supporting an aggressive stance in the Pacific. Recent sabre rattling against Taiwan may give a portent that something really serious is being contemplated. If that were to happen, then we would suddenly find ourselves in a much altered situation vis à vis China. The talk would likely turn to a new Cold War.

This is where the European dimension comes in. Since the United States finds itself unable to support the expenditure for a new Cold War against China, the only power capable of opposing Chinese ambitions would be the European Union. To do so, however, would require a number of things. Firstly, a united armed forces under central command; secondly a united political authority to direct that force. Since we are speaking of an aggressive power bent not only on territorial acquisitions, which might actually be secondary in Peking's thinking, but economic acquisitions in terms of controlling key resources such as oil and others, we would be dealing with localised, small scale engagements, which avoided nuclear conflagration. In short, *"resource wars in the Twenty First Century"*.

In the meantime, the media has placed China on the slow boiler in propaganda terms. Human rights abuses in that country are reported, perhaps under-reported, but reported nonetheless. This is really quite astonishing when you remember that nothing similar occurred during the first Cold War. The true facts of that situation were only relevant for stirring American anxieties, whereas the whole of the West is required to fund the stand-off now. As such, the whole of the West must be thoroughly steeped in the wrong doings of Red China. Even the barbaric practices conducted under the one-child policy are given a full airing, even though this clearly runs against the tenets of Liberalism. Such propaganda does not rise to such a crescendo that governments are forced to alter their friendly co-operation with the murderers of Peking, but there is just enough so that it will not come as a complete surprise later on.

There is no suggestion here that there is anything inaccurate about what is being reported, nor for one moment should we be inclined to view the actions of the Chinese regime with anything other than fear and loathing. What is being prepared, however, is not the liberation of the Chinese people, nor is this Cold War to be fought in pursuit of a victory leading to such liberation. The issue is the glaring hypocrisy

which will be involved, and the enormous material and personal costs which will be inflicted on the people of Europe, Ireland included, in a phantom struggle, which will never seriously threaten the stability of that regime. Along the way, it may involve us in a series of Vietnams however. It will not be anyone else's sons, who will die under false colours, but our own.

Avoiding that fate, while remaining within the European Union, is an impossible task. There isn't anything that Ireland alone could say or do, which would alter even minimally the process as it develops. This is no more than to restate the original logic of neutrality. It is, nonetheless, important to do so. To a certain extent, the detractors of the policy are correct, insofar as in the last Cold War, Ireland effectively had a free ride on the back of military expenditures by other nations - primarily the U.S. - while in practice being regarded by both sides as being part of the Western camp. For once, our proximity to the United Kingdom, and the strategic implications for the security of that country, were of benefit. It is unlikely that such a scenario will be repeated.

For one thing, the West in general would have seen Ireland as a poor nation, which would have required considerable subsidies to maintain a credible position in NATO. As a neutral, broadly aligned with the West, we were a much safer risk from their point of view without the political costs. It is not that some efforts weren't made, merely that on balance it wasn't worth pushing us too hard. In any future scenario, however, as a full member of the Union, we would be expected to play a much fuller role. In consequence, whatever direction is finally undertaken, provisions are necessarily going to have to be made for a significant increase in our own military capacity.

If we continue on the current track, it will be insisted upon by our "allies", who will be our real government. Alternatively, if we are serious about maintaining ourselves outside the fraudulent conflict, we will also require such increases in order to make that neutrality credible. In other words, we need to be able to defend our own shores, since we will clearly have refused to allow others to do so. Indeed, the word "increase" in this context is a misnomer. In fact, what is required is to *create* a military capacity, such is the feeble nature of the Defence Forces. Fortunately, in terms of public opinion, the question of that creation is separate from the situation itself, since it arises in either instance. It will, nonetheless, prove a considerable shock to the system for most Irish people, since the whole concept of potential war is so far removed from their world. In that sense, we have been living in a dream world of others making, which has allowed for pacifistic illusions; but we are fast approaching the time when Fact will meet Fantasy in collision. The principle benefit of the neutrality course lies in the fact that the decision-making in every possible event will be indigenous. Secondly, as a result, we are unlikely to become involved in real warfare. The alternative policy makes the latter inevitable.

Despite the recommendation here, it well behooves us to consider the moral dilemma which arises, and did arise, vis à vis the Soviet bloc. While accepting that the course of events is beyond our control strictly speaking, there cannot be, of course, a moral neutrality insofar as the various faults in Western society hardly compare to the barbarism of the regime in Red China. Positive neutrality should surely be one of

proclaiming solutions, even where those solutions have no immediate prospect of implementation. In particular, there is still time to condemn the monstrous policy of feeding the menace with Western technology and favourable trade terms, when the long term implications are so clear. We might well insist in such a moral stance that the very least thing would be to ring the Communist regime with the same restrictions as were imposed upon South Africa during apartheid. Indeed, properly applied right now, such restrictions would forestall later catastrophes. It furthermore behooves us to point out the glaring hypocrisy of pretending to fight the menace, while continuing such links as are vital to the maintenance of the regime's fighting capacity. Such things are in the realm of the immediately possible surely.

In other words, what we are speaking of is not neutrality in the ordinary sense of the word, but rather the avoidance of entanglement in the obligations of alliance, and the consequent physical involvement in the conflict which will inevitably ensue. This may be described by some as hypocritical, even selfish. It is certainly the latter, *since it is the only way to preserve the **national interest***. While there is no hypocrisy, there is most certainly selfishness in the national sense. Contrary to what adult political children believe, it is not only the right, but the responsibility, of a nation's leadership to pursue the national interest at all times and to the hilt. Indeed, quite a few of our problems, both domestic and foreign, can be traced to a collective blind eye having been turned, where politicians have pursued their private interests to the detriment of the country. The point is worth restating that while, as a people, we may earnestly desire the very best for all the peoples of the world, we must firstly preserve our own freedom and independence, from whence the luxury of being so concerned is ultimately derived.

If we understand the nature of the false struggle properly, we would know that there is little prospect of the triumph of Chinese Communism. Just as with the Soviet Union before it, China presents a picture of already enormous power and that it is daily growing. At the core, however, it remains hollow. Just like the Soviet Union, our Western perception of Chinese strength is based on several misconceptions. First and foremost among them is that China is a nation and thus an incredibly large one. The possibilities for such a nation engaged in an imperial endeavour would, of course, be equally enormous, global, if you like. In fact, China as we know it is already an empire, composed of many peoples every bit as divergent in national terms as the nations of Europe, if not more so. As such, the Powers-that-Be in Peking are very close now to imperial overreach, whereby the maintenance of its current extension is a strain. The effort required to turn that empire into a world superpower is likely both to exacerbate the strain internally, as well as add new burdens.

In the short to medium term, China's economic growth seems on a secure path as it brings into play much of the latent potential of the equivalent of a continent, in both population and resources. Chinese leaders have thus far been careful to ensure that the sapping of economic growth by military expenditure has been relatively controlled, and not an excessive drain. The coming years make inevitable an increasing realisation of that economic potential, and its harnessing to power-political ends through military build-up. However, and this is crucial, in order to maintain the

economic growth, which is the base for military expansion, China requires to adapt its social structures, particularly in the area of education. In doing so, it is likely to reawaken national sentiments within the borders of what is already held. It follows that the Chinese government will be in an internal race, between its ability to extend its power by military means, and the increased military means required to sustain control over the areas already held. The truth is that they may have reached the limits to which expansion is possible, without incurring the law of diminishing returns. They are probably unable to take control of new territories without inviting internal collapse and disorder. In short, the single greatest opponent to the ambitions of Red China is the ideology of Nationalism.

This brings us neatly to the essence of a most modern problem - namely whether, despite the propaganda daily poured forth from media circles, there remains a role for the Nation-State. According to received opinion, the nation state is a nineteenth century phenomenon and has run its course, even so far as being positively dangerous in a nuclear age. There is a superficial plausibility to the thesis, yet the thesis falls apart upon examination. The foremost cause of war in the modern age has not been Nationalism in any real sense, but rather Imperialism in the form of the attempt by various nations to extend their power beyond the boundaries of the nation state. This occurs either in the resource struggles mentioned, or in the direct political incorporation of divergent peoples into the one state. In other words, it is where the proper concept of the nation state has given way to the artificial notion of Statism.

The Nation State, properly understood, is a natural occurrence. Logically, it is a kind of political extrapolation of the idea of Family, insofar as ethnically speaking we are talking of a people closely related by blood and bonded together by shared culture, which seeks to give political expression to that shared origin and destiny in the form of that structure we call the State. While it keeps this form, the problems which arise are few and soluble, both internal and external. Internally, problems can arise where the State comes to regard itself as superior to its function, tends to be self-serving and exists for its own right. Internal problems also arise where the State is not synonymous with a people, and becomes a conglomeration of several peoples bound together, not by shared ancestry and culture, but simply by the power of the State. External conflict finds its modern origin most commonly where the borders of the State are not consistent ethnically. In other words, where two neighbouring states have as a portion of their population, people who, properly speaking, belong within the other State. To continue the family analogy, we can well imagine the conflicts which would arise where two neighbouring families had children from the other family in their homes, and insisted on raising them as their own - even though the children themselves longed to go home; or where one family insisted on using the facilities of their neighbour's house as their own, without the consent of the other family because they had the physical force to impose their wishes.

Consider then whether such conflicts have their origin in Nationalism, or are instead the inevitable product of the suppression of Nationalism, which is as natural and unsuppressable as family sentiment. Consider whether such conflicts would really have arisen, much less ended in violence, had the parties involved had the common

sense to recognise the right of another nation to its nationhood, and all the resources required for the maintenance of that nationhood.

It is a fact that where States quarrel, it is always where the dividing line between the State and between the Nation is confused. Nowhere where the Nation State is a national whole, with its independence as a State, do such conflicts emerge. Think of Northern Ireland, if you doubt it.

It is true that often the imperial endeavour sought justification in Nationalism, and appropriated the symbols and ceremonies of Nationalism in pursuit of its goals. Such appropriation was not always entirely dishonest, insofar as the leaders of such countries may consciously have believed that the expansionist imperial aims were consonant with the national interest in a vital way. Certainly the latter part of the nineteenth century was dominated by the idea that the maintenance of Great Power status was consonant with Empire, and that Great Power status was the minimum required for ordinary independence. There was some validity to the argument, but it was a kind of self-fulfilling one. In order to maintain independence, a nation needed to suppress and exploit one or more other nations. Not to do so was likely to make one the victim of some other nation's ambitions to achieve the same. It was a Catch 22 situation. The most significant thing to note, however, is not what this has to do with Nationalism - since quite plainly it is an aberration or more precisely an anti-nationalist idea - but how the logic has re-emerged in more recent times with a different form, geared to a public relations age.

What we mean is that we are told that small nations must increasingly gather themselves into power blocs, like the European Union, since they are too small alone to maintain and defend their independence. In other words, that free nationhood is impossible outside Great Power status, and the only modern way to achieve that is the voluntary ceding of sovereignty. If this is absurd, the absurdity has not prevented it from catching on. It is used in argument in each European referendum. We must be part of the Union or else we will be left with no influence in the world; consequently, we must enter the forums of Union where we have very little influence, and seek to make the best of a vehicle which is directed to the interests of the supra-national whole. Just how quickly this form of competitive world power view leads to conflict may be observed in the imperial logic in the pre-World War I period. In our age, we are hurtling towards confrontation with China.

Is it not far truer to say that small powers lack the ability to menace one another and, in their complete sovereignty, lack the desire to do so? If we are left out of the councils of Europe to forge our own destiny, is it not also true that we are thereby left out of councils of war-like intent? We might observe also that the ultimate solution to the problem of imperialist China lies, not in the formation of another supra-national bloc, but in the nationalist sentiment of the peoples within that empire which we ignorantly insist in calling Chinese. China is only a menace insofar as it has the power to be a menace on an international scale. A China of nations, formed of the independent parts of the current whole, on the other hand, lacks that ability to wage war.

The great historical irony of the age is that we are creating, for the purposes of preventing international wars, conglomerations of nation states (which we are told

are anarchic) into supra-national entities, which can, and will, conflict with each other, and fracture internally on ethnic and nationalistic lines. The only serious question is not which will be destructive of international order and peace, but rather which will be the more destructive.

Imperialism has as its core value, the domination of one nation by another. As such, there is no qualification on the nature of that domination. In other words, it does not treat of whether the Imperial power treats its subjects fairly, benignly, or even beneficially. Historical example provides the experience of both harsh and kindly foreign rule, yet it is nonetheless foreign for all that. Neither is the means by which the relationship of dominance came about at issue, whether by conquest or consent. In fact, last century's most unstable Empire, Austria (sometimes called Austro-Hungary in deference to the rather complicated concept of dual monarchy), was largely created by consent, through adept royal marriages by the Hapsburgs, who generally were monarchs inept at war.

This is an important point to note, for otherwise we are failing to grasp the extraordinary correlation between the imperialist ideology, which fuelled much of the last century's wars, and the endeavour to create a European Federal state, which is modelled on basic imperialist principles. There is no single dominant party, though one might, without stretching the mind, see many of the characteristics of such a dominance in the current Franco-German axis. This makes the thing no better, for all it means is that each of the nations finds itself controlled by the amorphous whole, a bland, self-serving bureaucracy of the Union. That the Union is not there to pursue, say, British interests, as did their Empire, makes the sway of non-indigenous power serving foreign interests no less real, and only adds the proviso that everyone shares the same fate.

Equally true, but misleading, is that each of the member states of the Union ceded sovereignty voluntarily, insofar as "voluntary" might be defined as the absence of armed force in the decision to join and accept further integration. Without getting into the problem of whether democratic decisions bind in perpetuity all future generations, it is simply not true to state that any of the peoples of Europe agreed to the formation of the Union which has been created. Leaving aside those things, which the general populations did not understand, and even those things about which they were told lies, there is still the extent to which each step was presented as a *fait accompli*, with the "democratic process" providing no outlet for dissent. It is the problem with which we dealt in a previous chapter specifically relating to the Irish situation: - namely, that where the whole of the party political Establishment wishes something, and the force of the markets dictate it, in practice there is very little a people can do to prevent it happening.

Moreover, on the point of whether the Union is a voluntary association of states "*pooling sovereignty*", it is worth asking - whatever the validity of the original commitment - whether it is really possible to call it voluntary now. In other words, it remains unknown what might happen should any State attempt to withdraw. The indications, from the reaction to Denmark's decision to reject the Maastricht Treaty, are worrying.

In the interests of international security, and in the name of preventing nations

being overcome by superior and malign powers, we are demanding that they freely cede their independence to a multi-national edifice, which will then confront the enemy - which is likewise a multi-national state, and claiming the same need for security in its endeavours. Looking out on the world then, the two conflicting Superpowers need to find allies and supporting resources. We may guess that, for the European Union, the primary ally will be the weakened, but still significant, United States. For China, it will be the Russian Federation. In each case, the senior partner in the original allied arrangement has become the junior, but otherwise we have simply escalated the level of confrontation. The battlegrounds in physical terms will still be the same: South East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

Far from being the great advance of post-Cold war thinking, we are entering upon a great regression. That we are doing so blindly, with apparent democratic mandate, makes it all the more tragic. It will not banish war, that is certain. The real tragedy lies in the dangers which it poses to the relationship of nations, which in spite of their new political status as "member" or subject states, remain actual nations. There has been peace in Western Europe since the World War. Centuries old conflicts between nations have settled into peaceful forums of discussion, and the striking nature of the new relationship between Germany and France has doubtless brought great benefit to both their peoples. It is worth noting, however, that these relationships largely had their foundation in the inability to fight, and in their fear of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, there lies within the dynamic the very real possibility of a lasting peace in Western Europe, founded on the respect and trust built up between countries for whom co-operation has proved more fruitful than even victorious war. Indeed, the lessons of the last century are that even the victors suffer almost the same magnitude of damage as the loser.

Most salient, however, is that that peace has been built, not on the artificial structures and institutions of the European Union, or any of the like-associations, but rather in the solid absence of competing ambitions and the recognition of boundaries to nationhood, which respect fostered. The most effective means to fracture that trust is to create, out of forums for discussions on co-operation, a monolithic structure which suppresses national sentiment and generates tension. Though it may seem to be an excessive claim, history and experience suggest that there is no better way to rekindle the flames of national furies. Nations will again feel threatened to the very core of their existence by the impositions of the Federal Union and, in the absence of an identifiable source for the problem, will likely lead to a return of ancient antagonisms, founded on notions such as German domination. There is one thing of which we can be sure. At some point, just as with the United States, the question of the supremacy of the Union over the States must be settled. Unless the peoples of Europe prove utterly supine, that question will be settled violently, for you can be sure that the willingness of the federal establishment to concede peaceful secession will disappear with the Federal army, which can act independently of the several states.

Contrariwise, the Nationalist Cause links together the peoples of Europe at this crucial time, in a way that could hardly have been foreseen. Those who believe in the rights of nationhood are finding that they have considerably more in common that

they do with their respective Establishments, and certainly more than with the institutions of the Union. This is the truly remarkable phenomenon of the last decade - namely the growing links throughout Europe between groups and organisations determined to preserve their own countries independence, and thoughtful enough to realise that only acting in concert with nationally-minded organisations in other countries can they hope to defeat the federalists. Thus, there is an emerging awareness among the nationalist groups within the Union of the profound philosophical nature of Nationalism as an ideology, not of selfish aggrandisement, but of mutual respect and co-operation. The realisation dawns that the real onslaught against their freedoms comes not from any other peoples desiring the same, but from the forces of internationalism as such. We can have no greater guarantee of peace in Europe than that these forces are successful in this, paradoxically, united struggle against unity. This is far more powerful, since the unity which they possess is the unity of the heart and mind, whereas federalist unity is of structures and institutions. For the first time in a populist movement, we are seeing the development of an holistic concept of national identities rather than just identity.

Within the context of the main themes of this book, the philosophical grounding may be summarised as such. If, within a given country, we expect the individual, both to be respected in his rights and respectful of his duties, that is no less the case in international relations. If we have discounted the possibility that government, unfettered by absolute and unchangeable principles concerning the rights of individuals, will for long permit the true freedom of the individual, how are we to apply this to international affairs? Clearly for individuals, it may be applied by Constitutional protection. This is inconceivable on a global political scale, where the application of so-called international law has served only to further the interests of the larger powers, and has never really included a moral foundation of any substance. In practice, the only means by which the nations may avoid the tyranny of centralisation is by the exercise of full sovereignty.

There is, of course, no guarantee against war. Interpersonal relationships, based on freedom, occasionally lead to violent clashes. Though these are to be regretted, most people recognise that it would be insane for society to accept the kind of legalistic controls, which would be required to prevent this in each and every potential incidence. So it is with nations. Quarrels are possible, violent clashes occasionally inevitable, but there lies in the widespread acceptance of the rights of sovereignty, the ideological offset of such disputes. It bears repetition that there is a cast iron guarantee of massive violence in the attempts to create rigid conglomerations of nations. How can any sensible person regard a civil war in Europe with less horror than a potential, but unlikely, one between independent states. Not one less life would be lost, but the bitterness engendered would be staggered through decades afterwards.

To the argument that the global village has made the nation state redundant, the reality is that the very opposite is true. Technological advances have had the effect of making the smallest of national units viable as states, in a way which was probably not the case even three or four decades ago. More importantly, they have made them necessary, if we are not to be swamped by a globalism which positively

destroys the individual worth of the human being by rendering him an anonymous part of an uncontrollable mechanism, directed by forces unseen.

Just as no superior way of begetting and raising children than in a Family has, or will, be found, it is impossible to conceive politically a structure by which man's need for society can be balanced against his equal need not to have his personality completely subsumed in the mass. The Nation is part of the individual's personality, natural and complementary to it, giving group identification between persons among whom there is also a willingness to make room for independent expressions. In short, all but the coldest people have some feeling for their fellow countrymen, and that emotional bond has practical consequences in the positive sense.

The only qualification that seems to make sense is the need to control the multi-national corporation wielding, as it does, enormous financial power. It is widely held that only a government larger than the corporation will be able to exercise control over the behaviour of the corporation. This is to put the cart before the horse in the worst way. In this way, we are not even addressing the core problem, which lies with the existence of such corporations, and the part they are playing in the corrupt capitalist system. A national government, which sought to defend the country's independence from foreign political masters, would be criminally negligent in disregarding the need to preserve the ability to guard the people's rights against foreign financial masters. Dismantling that system is a priority for any sensible government embarking of a nationalist agenda, and should be regarded as a given.

As a point against State sovereignty, the dangers of corporate money power exist only where the State sovereignty ideal is advanced by people whose ideological view is retarded, i.e. the so-called Tory Euro-sceptics. This is not to mention that the supra-national states, lacking as they do the natural cohesion of national identification, are far more prone to corruption by the same financial interests that they are supposedly to have enough power to control. It is for this reason, among others, that those interests have been to the forefront in supporting all efforts to create the European Union.

On another level, it is a principle of Catholic social thinking that Subsidiarity is a priority for good government. On practical grounds, the further power is removed from the understanding of the ordinary person, the further that power is removed from the interests of the ordinary person. Even within the confines of the nation that is to be jealously protected from the centripetal process inherent in all bureaucratic forms, even those of originally benign or beneficial intent. The laziest observer will be aware of the enormous power exercised by the Union in the lives of ordinary people and that that, coupled with the incredible apathy displayed by the general public towards events in the European context, must give rise to concern. Here, we have the prescribed recipe for tyranny: - enormous political power shielded from criticism, or even serious evaluation.

From this perspective, it is not only open to debate that the Union is too large, but even that some of the member states are too large not to fall within the danger margins. It is inconceivable that a country of fifty million people or more could create anything like the ideal participative, political process and are confined by their size to make the best of it. It would seem rather that the ideal, national

population is some twenty millions, allowing a large enough home market to permit self-sufficient economics, and yet small enough to permit the political process to remain within the rational control of the citizenry. The only solid grounds, on which to think otherwise, have at their base an imperialist motivation, since we find those who claim the need for bigger and bigger blocs always end up speaking about competition, conflict and power. It goes without saying that it is an impractical idea to break up the various states. Properly constituted, the Nation State is a naturally occurring phenomenon, and depends for its existence on the same natural foundations. Breaking them up would be like breaking up families, on the grounds that the parents had less contact with the children than was ideally desirable, simply because there were so many of them. The nations of Europe could, nonetheless, benefit greatly from looking at the possibilities of internal, federal structures.

These issues do not arise for Ireland, because the population is far too small. In general, it has served the political process well that, in spite of a corrupt Establishment, the very fact of Ireland's smallness has meant that very little untoward has gone on in secret. It has always been possible, for a relatively small group of citizens, to bring matters of concern onto the national agenda. While Ireland maintained its independence, there was moreover the very real possibility of doing something about it. So it must be again.

Thus, the thoughtful minds in Ireland are returning to where their hearts always were - to the principles and ideals of freedom, and the dawning realisation that we are speaking of *a withdrawal* from the European Union. This is no small endeavour. In fact, the Federalists have effected a warping of what was, in essence, both a good and beneficial idea - namely, the close co-operation on matters of shared concern of each of the states. It was, and is, true that the peoples of Europe share a cultural heritage, which makes them enough alike to make the strong case for its political expression. The geographical proximity on a shared continent made it inevitable that it should come about in some form as soon as old antagonisms were buried, and we should look forward to the completion of a more sensible process of co-operation in the future. It is only that the Federal Union is not it, and in the immediate term, there are only two options on the table: Federalism and Independence. Of the two, the course of independence, even with its difficulties, is superior in all respects.

The urgency of the choice is upon us. The creation of the Super-State is, to all intents and purposes, complete. In other words, it is not possible simply to redirect the process. It must be abruptly halted altogether. In the case of a small country like our own, for which it is not practical to attempt to halt the process, we can only withdraw.

Before contemplating the possible scenarios in which such a withdrawal might be initiated, it is vital to review the consequences of such a unilateral action; that is to say, a scenario in which Ireland leaves the Union on its own, and is not joined by any other member state. In all honesty, we must allow that nothing else changes on the wider international scene, to further the plausibility of that course. We are not speaking here of the likely situation, in spite of what many believe, yet is worth considering whether the so-called "*doomsday scenario*" of the Euro-federalists is, in fact, such a doomsday at all.

Thinking in this regard is significantly warped at the present time, since in most analysis there is the presupposition, not only that there will be no international change, but no national change either. This is clearly absurd. In other words, when we speak of Ireland's dependence on the European Union, the usual arguments presented are valid only if we remain a small open economy, export driven and subsidy reliant. In such a situation, we would have no choice. Similar arguments were advanced in the last century, concerning attachment to the British Empire. Although they appeared convincing, they did not halt the struggle for political independence, though they did inhibit decisive action to address the question of economic independence. The result was that the new Irish state remained an open economy, though open only to Britain, and export driven, again only to Britain. The effect was not encouraging, but led to an incorrect conclusion: - that economic independence had been tried and had failed. Much is made of the protectionism of early Fianna Fail governments to bolster the assertion. It is an example, however, of where those framing the question cannot fail but to arrive at the predetermined answer.

Any Irish government, determined to withdraw from the Union, must accept the impossibility of doing so in the context of pursuing globalist economic policies. If you are going to have an export driven economy, then it is necessary to have access to markets as large as possible, and on the most favourable terms possible. It follows that the other players in that large market will wish to have the same access to your markets, and on similar terms. There is no problem with this, while there is no problem with the ebb and flow of the markets, and while on balance the players within your economy, directing the export drive remain committed on the manufacturing side to you as their base for access to the wider market; and while these players remain themselves successful. This is, however, as we explained earlier in the book, a fundamentally unsound way to run an economy since the lives and incomes of real people and families are dependent upon it.

The question is about priorities. It is about whether the government of Ireland is committed to the long term interests of the people of Ireland, or is so thoroughly wedded to international Capitalism as to take no note of the pitfalls. The key factor in success and failure in the globalist model is outside the power of the government to control, and it is consequently outside the power of the people of this country to protect themselves and secure their long term future. While there are times where fate, decided by others and in the interests of others, may smile benignly for a while, there can be no substitute for controlling your own destiny. To some extent, Ireland is enjoying a brief period of the smile right now. As a consequence, potential problems, even looming disasters, are not at the forefront of most people's thinking. That does not change the facts.

The case for a root and branch alteration in the direction of economic strategy is made on its own merits, strictly independent of political attitudes to European Federalism. However, there is an enormous impact as any shift from the export drive is a move away from dependence on foreign markets, and pulls the ground from under economic arguments, which say that we have no choice but to remain with the Union. Ironically, there could be no better time to prepare for such a reform, since it

could be funded from the high-point of export success. However, political considerations, and the average person's understandable desire to enjoy its fruits immediately, militate against doing so. We are back to realpolitik, where radical change is unthinkable until it is unthinkable not to.

The case is made by the kind of international entanglements that the Union clearly intends to involve itself in, and these have consequences for this country. Notwithstanding that they would never admit to foreseeing conflict with Red China, their declared plans in the name of "security" already carry awesome implications. At the very least, they include intervention in all and every situation in which the actions of any country threatens perceived stability. The terror bombing of Serbia, although directly a NATO-sanctioned action, is the sort of "security" situation they have in mind. Given the volatility of the Balkans, such incidents may multiply in both military and financial terms. Nor is there any commitment to restrict such interventions to the continent. What if Argentina were to invade the Falkland Islands again? That is not the only overseas possession of member states, claimed by its neighbours, which would fall by succession to the Union. Are we meant to take the commitment to aid in the defence of Europe as a commitment to defend their imperial hangovers?

The merits, or otherwise, of intervention in each of the above examples and countless other possibilities is not under discussion. In fact, no such discussion can arise. Military obligations within federal unions are not debatable, they simply oblige by force of their existence. Are Irish people seriously willing to allow their sons (and daughters!) to be sent half way around the world to fight wars, not of their making and not of real concern to them? In short, are they willing to die in the "*resource wars of the twenty first century*"? As we have had it so sharply explained to us, these obligations are the price of being in the club. Refusal amounts to a decision to leave, and not even at a time of our own choosing. Even if the economic argument were sound, it would still come down to this: which is more important, your job or your life? Are you willing to die for the economy? Kill for it?

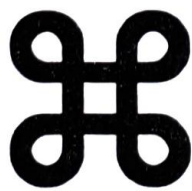
That is the starkest choice: - ***unilateral withdrawal***. World affairs, however, are never that static, and it is inconceivable that the events required to wake Ireland out of its indifference would not be such as to move others as well. It is evident that the Union is distinctly worried by popular opinion right across Europe. It is a concern which is not misplaced. There isn't the slightest chance that a referendum held on federalism throughout the member states would be passed. It is unlikely that it would pass in any single one. The process of advancing integration using treaties, with the powers already granted in them, is really an outrageously dangerous one. Ordinary people may show little awareness of esoteric political decisions, but events on the ground are clear even to the dimmest person. In time the implementation of the scheme must produce a reaction, and one all the more violent and unpredictable for having been only discovered at such a late stage.

It seems unlikely, given the innate conservatism of the Irish people, both in the positive and negative senses, that Ireland will be the first to act in its own defence. Britain is currently showing, outwardly at least, the most sustained discomfort with federalism, coupled with a fairly widespread knowledge of the end point of the process.

Either way the likely scenario is for some other country to take the lead. What is important is that once it is done, then the unthinkable suddenly becomes not only thinkable but immediately practical. Throughout Europe politicians of all persuasions will find it difficult to think of anything else. The sheer panic, which greeted the Danes decision to reject Maastricht, will pale in comparison.

Then will arise the opportunity not only for withdrawal, but also the opportunity to create among the withdrawing nationalist states the kind of loose, co-operative confederation which is the only viable model of intra-European development in the long term. Just exactly what form it might take is open to conjecture, but what is certain is that the criteria essential to it will break with past assumptions concerning economics and international relations. It will crack the current Establishment wide open.

Where Ireland will go from there is impossible to say. This much is worth saying. Both the possibilities and responsibilities of real national freedom will fall on the shoulders of the Irish people for the first time in centuries. This generation of Irish men and women have the potential to do great things. *It remains to be seen whether they are up to the challenge.*



Appendix 1.

A Special Case For Agriculture.

Agriculture has more than an economic value. If this were not so, the current trend, referred to as the flight from the land, would be of no greater significance than any other economic restructuring. Indeed, it might even be said to be a positive thing - an advance to industrial efficiency and higher employment growth. Instinctively, however, most people know there is something dangerous about the growing rural/urban imbalance in Ireland. In the economic sphere, there is something heartening in the knowledge that, if push were to come to shove, we could feed ourselves. The sharp decline in the number of farming families is therefore of particular concern, especially insofar as now more than one third of the population lives in just one city. Even in communities not directly dependent upon agriculture, this ought to be a source of great anxiety.

It is impossible to consider the future of Irish Agriculture and how to arrest its apparent terminal decline, without having regard to the full extent of the problem; without asking how we came to this state in the first instance. Clearly, the problem is much older than most of the general public imagine. After all, to hear media commentators speak, one could be forgiven for thinking that the decline in Agriculture is relatively recent and related, directly and almost exclusively, to the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy. On the contrary, statistics reveal that, between the years 1926 and 1971, the number of Irish farmers dropped from 269,000 to 182,000 - or on average by 0.86% annually, even before joining the European Union. Of more significance is the fact that the number dropped by another 62,000 to 120,000 by 1986 (2.65% annually from 1971 to 1986), long before the reforms of the C.A.P. If we are to judge the health of any industry in people terms - which is to say, by the numbers who are able to gain their livelihood from that industry - it is apparent that agriculture is an 'industry' that has been in trouble for a long time. In the tertiary-related industries, we find that, though the numbers in the food industry increased from 31,000 in 1951 to 44,000 in 1972, it has since fallen back to 37,000 as of 1991.

What these figures reveal is fundamental structural problems, which date from the foundation of the State, but which were severely exacerbated by our membership of the European Union. That membership was particularly destructive of downstream employment potential, precisely the area of primary value which alone might allow an unsubsidised agriculture to grow and prosper. The enormous myth that the Common Agricultural Policy was of great benefit to the farmers of Ireland and something to be defended in its essentials is, therefore, wholly exploded.

What happened was that the immediate increase in prices, afforded by the C.A.P. and guaranteed by intervention, smothered the nascent food processing industry and all

initiative in agriculture, by altering the market in favour of what would in the long run be uneconomic, commodity production. During the period 1970 to 1990, the total share of Irish agricultural output devoted to milk and cattle increased from 54% to 71%. This could not allow for the growth of sustainable high wage farming, but would reduce Ireland to an efficient Third World style producer. It ought to have been obvious that, if ever we had to return market prices, the technological superiority in production would not alter demonstrably the fact that we were producing the same standard type of food.

The result would be that those willing to accept a much lower living standard would have an enormous advantage, which could only be overcome by economies of scale involving farms of the size and output of, say, New Zealand. This in turn would mean a fraction of the current number of actual farmers.

Without the C.A.P., Ireland might have naturally developed the value added solution, and been forced by the market to diversify; but with EEC prices geared for continental farmers producing all year round with expenses of £64 per £100 final product seasonal advantages in Ireland with grass based milk and beef at expenses of £44 per £100 made the skewing all the more prominent. Our tertiary industry, ruined by virtually free trade, it is now nearly impossible to conceive the full consequences of the imminent removal of price supports on the commodity production previously encouraged. What is certainly true is that Irish farmers are in for a rough time, and further decline is inevitable unless drastic steps are taken.

Returning to our first figures, we have an indication that the C.A.P. was not the only problem, as the number of farmers was already declining. Certain structural deficiencies must already have been present. Primary among these must be that successive Irish governments have rewarded the "ranch" style of farming in all its taxation policies, even where the size of the farm is small. By ranch style, we mean farming which minimises the amount of inputs set against outputs from any given piece of land. This means allowing the land to produce what it would with the minimum of interference by the farmer. Any extra effort or investment on his part has run very quickly up against the law of diminishing returns, whereby, although he may get a higher overall productivity, he gets fewer pounds back per pound invested. Taxation policy, which has never seriously taxed the holding of land, but rather taxed heavily anything put into it - including labour - has ensured that it is uneconomic for the farmer to continue to put money into the land already in his possession. It is better to put any investment money into more land as it becomes available, and continue to draw only the natural output from that land. This is broadly what happened.

Again the C.A.P. compounded this problem, and drove land prices up by something close to forty times that between the mid-Sixties and the mid-Eighties. This is about four times faster than the average inflation rate. Not so very long ago it was possible to consider buying into farming from a starting point of no land. This is no longer conceivable, adding to the attrition of unreplaced farmers over the years.

A radical approach to Irish agriculture, even at this late stage, would be to remove all taxation on the inputs of investment in farming and on all income from farming. Instead, a rate of Land tax based on the number of acres held and its potential productivity could be set. The immediate effect would be to encourage a more intensive

use of available land, amid a diversification in its use. Land prices would fall, since the holding of land - relative to output - would become uneconomic, with unproductive farmers pushed out to make way for more productive ones. More importantly, given that it is numbers on the land which is the aim, it would give a great advantage to small farmers, who have always made more intensive use of land, and mean that larger farmers would find it relatively difficult to maintain their current land size, without employing farm labour to increase productivity per acre. All of this would involve the minimum of State interference in the market, which would function better in consequence.

When formulating a sensible agricultural policy, it is crucial to remember what can and what cannot be done. Certainly for the Irish farmer to compete at world price levels is a task of enormous difficulty, but that is no great excuse for ignoring it. The GATT agreement on tariffs and trade is already signed and, insofar as it is, there is no possibility of maintaining subsidies for agriculture in the long run. We must be aware too that, whatever representations we might make, the likelihood is that the next GATT will remove most of the import controls still in place in the Union. Anyone who says otherwise is doing no service to the farmers. The Irish government is in no position to maintain such subsidies, and the European Union has no intention of doing so. A crisis of huge proportions inevitably awaits thanks to successive governments.

What is clear though is that the absolute world market price will not hold true, since it is skewed by the dumping of food on Third World markets. Nor does it take account of transportation costs, which give the local producer in any area some advantages. For example, it is simply not practicable to transport large quantities of some agricultural produce to the Western European market, and still maintain a price advantage whatever the starting point may have been. Ireland is a small producer in world terms, and can switch much or even all its production over to what globally is a niche market, but which is more than large enough to consume the whole of our relatively small scale production.

Of primary significance, though, is the need to redevelop the tertiary and value added food industries, even if this means setting them at a tax advantage relative to other industrial enterprises. This means setting the maintenance of numbers on the land as a priority for social as well as economic reasons. The pure free market would not favour its natural growth at this late stage, and purely financial estimates would not recommend it as other than a very long term investment.

Politically, reality forces the realisation that this must be done very soon. The numbers involved in agriculture and related industries is declining at such a rate that it will not be much longer before the farming community becomes electorally irrelevant. People not directly affected in Ireland show a remarkable unwillingness to appreciate the importance of this sector beyond a balance sheet approach. One might even go so far as to say that there is a positive hostility, born of a feeling that farmers have received more than their fair share already, even though that is only true in a few cases.



Rules of Engagement.

The results of the last General Election for the so-named Traditionalist Parties were, when you think about them, really quite extraordinary. Perhaps it does not appear so, if you are only considering the fact that no candidates were elected - but who seriously thought they would be on the first outing.? Of course, they bore many more handicaps than that. Faced with the major party machines, they lacked sufficient financing; the inexperience of their leadership meant a lack of professionalism; and their manifestoes had almost no media attention paid to them, consigning the candidates to the single issue ghetto which invariably ruins prospects in national elections. Even more significantly the candidates themselves, many of whom would admit as much, were not "political" people. Their involvement in politics on any level was generally very recent, and consequently their names were generally not well known. Against all these negatives, however, the parties polled an average of 1,340 votes in each of the constituencies contested, which by any measure is respectable. It is certainly possible that with lessons learned, financing secured and under peculiar local conditions, the parties might see quite a few successes in the forthcoming local elections. I will not make any prophecies in this regard. I only remark that it is possible, and that the prospect may be alluring to those who have seen with dismay both Catholic and basic human decency principles openly derided in public life in recent years. Such successes, if built upon, appear to hold out a shining opportunity to turn back the tide.

We need to look carefully at the substance of such hopes, and we need to do so mindful of the appalling fact that what nationalists choose to do in the next ten to fifteen years with their efforts will probably prove decisive, since it is unlikely that we will receive another opportunity. Many of the themes close to our own hearts still have a resonance with the population at large. This can be a powerful weapon, properly directed, but time is short.

I do not mean here to deal with the nature of the parties themselves, since this is not the point. Their leaders, if we are honest, lack not only experience of politics, but that real "grasp" of politics that is now vital. If their election manifestoes are to be taken at face value, they seem to have no idea as to what is really wrong with this country. Their analyses are more of symptoms than of disease, and then only some of these. That neither the C.S.P. nor the National Party has displayed the courage to declare itself unashamedly Catholic is really appalling, and reveals a tendency to substitute superficial pragmatism for real principle. In practice, it isn't even common sense, since it denies them access to the traditional social teachings of the Church - while the media "Catholic bash" them anyway. This is compounded by a willingness to appear on any programme to defend the institution and individuals of the new Church, when no Catholic can in conscience be obliged to do so. These things are

mentioned. They are not important to the idea, since they are correctable faults. Leaders may be replaced and policies changed. The real question is whether it is reasonable to believe, or likely to happen, that a Catholic renaissance might arise out of the party political process as such.

To understand this question leads us to question whether the problems we face are peripheral issues concerning certain policies by the System parties, or whether we are faced with a profound moral and spiritual malaise. The intellect, which is so stunted as to accept the former explanation, must necessarily be of limited use in formulating an adequate response to the dangers which we now face, even on those issues where we are in agreement. Such a mind may well accept that, say, abortion is murder, but is lost as to how it came about that a nation could seriously debate the merits of slaughtering its own children. The realization that the latter is the case, however, raises more questions than it answers; and it can be quite depressing. It requires the understanding of the varied and complex factors, which led us to the current state - both historical and contemporary - and placing them in a context in order to arrive at sober solutions. Against such a background, it must be obvious that this cannot be done by a parliamentary party. The measure of a party is electoral success, and this surely cannot be achieved by assaulting the public mind in a three week campaign on the complexities of social decline.

Take another example, Monetary Reform. It is at the core of Catholic social teaching, and it is impossible to imagine sound economics without it. Yet we are living in what is termed the "Celtic Tiger", and no-one it seems thinks there is any problem on this front. Time and tide will tell the lie of the mythologies of this economic 'miracle', but now is now and the general public have little time for talk of radical initiatives. Monetary Reform is, while being quite simple in its fundamentals, difficult to explain to people not familiar with any of its concepts. It is not suited to mass party politics at this stage, and at best we can hope that the idea spreads in the underground of sensible persons who think in the longer term. Political parties have no time for longer term thinking, however. Their successes must be in the immediate. I have been told by some of the party politicals that it is an interesting idea just not very practical right now. They mean that it would be too difficult to explain in the context of an election campaign. So far as it goes they are correct, but patronising core Catholic thinking to the level of an "interesting idea" is symptomatic of the false practicalities forced by the party political process. It is not because it is interesting that we should think about the issues surrounding the nature and use of money, *it is because it is necessary*.

This point is not peripheral but actually fundamental, since it runs to the inability in form for an organisation with electoral ambitions to address questions of substance. Such questions of substance, and there are many more of them than mentioned above, cannot be expressed in the soundbite, brief leaflet fashion which lends itself to normal campaigning. In order for a political party to get an opportunity to have itself understood on such matters, it would need the co-operation of a sizeable section of the media, which would allow the subject to be treated at length, and with

the repetition of theme, which modern propaganda requires. No such co-operation can be expected, so vital matters are shelved as 'impractical'.

Instead, we must embark upon the effort to make ourselves understood and accepted by the general public on a limited platform. The public for their part see what the party politicals can not - that it is nonsense to form parties to change one or two policy items on the national agenda. Of course, they refuse to vote for them. That is hardly the worst of it. The attempt is chronically expensive. A figure of £15,000 was quoted by the C.S.P. itself for a by-election campaign in Dublin before the last General Election. It is unlikely that this money produced a single extra vote, but even if it had, it certainly produced no change. What many fail to grasp is that had the candidate been elected, there would have been equally little chance of producing change.

If we are honest, we will admit that Catholics are notoriously mean about funding movements for salvaging the fate of their religion. In consequence, the total amount of finance available is at all times severely limited. There are exceptions, however, where individuals have shown extraordinary generosity and made great personal sacrifices. They deserve better than to have this limited resource frittered away on inane projects. Elections are expensive, everyone knows that. *They are also pointless, and not everyone seems to realise this.*

Let us suppose for a moment that several T.D.'s had been elected for these parties. The System could do any number of things. It might, for example, make a tactical retreat on abortion, offer a Pro-Life Referendum, and pull the ground from under them. The media might launch into one of its more outrageous assaults and link these T.D.s with all manner of "dangerous" people. Remember the references to "*shadowy right wing forces in America*" during the Divorce referendum? The System parties might seek to isolate them from the normal political process, thus depriving their constituents of legitimate representation. In the end, the constituents will blame the T.D.s *not* the System. If by some miracle these parties continued to grow, the State can in the last resort change the electoral laws to disallow their candidates, or revert to a single seat, "*first past the post*" election as in England. They could even fake the election results altogether if they got desperate enough. There is something else of which the thinking person will be aware. Though legislative power lies in Dail Eireann, practical power lies in many quarters: the Trades Unions, media, employers organisations, multi-national corporations operating within and without the country, not to mention the European Union. If a traditionalist party were to enter government without the support of a combination of these, does anyone seriously imagine that such a government could survive. Holding the head while the body is in open revolt is a worse than useless endeavour, even if it could be done.

It never occurs to the traditionalist parties that the Establishment would do any of these things. Of course, their naiveté shows just how far removed from the real fight for political power they are. Ireland is controlled by an Establishment, which would certainly prefer to destroy the State than to give it up. Appreciating this is a primer for thinking about politics *seriously*.

Not that any such panic strategy is likely, for the parties have imbedded within themselves the seeds of their own destruction if this was ever required. In order to be registered as a party in this State, it is necessary to provide evidence of certain things - membership throughout the country etc. Crucially, one must also provide evidence that the party has a democratic constitution. At the moment, this seems to mean nothing since the parties are internally agreed at least on the basics. Yet it is obvious that if the parties were to grow, the membership of those parties would be less well known to the leadership personally, and in consequence less under their control. This means that they are at all times subject to being taken over, either by people working directly for our opponents, or just by people who think differently. If that were to happen, all the resources in terms of money and effort previously expended would have come to nothing. Does anyone seriously believe that it will all be available again for another try? That the leadership of either the CSP or NP would be horrified by such undemocratic sentiments, I do not doubt. I am addressing myself to traditional Catholics, whom I refer to the very many encyclicals explicitly condemning the notion of leaving matters of Truth at the whim of majorities. Pragmatism may argue for accepting it temporarily in the State, but to introduce it into your own organisation is criminal negligence.

This is the kernel of the problem. The temptation towards a party political solution is the desire for the familiar, and its leaders, while finding certain aspects of the "modern" agenda unpalatable, are nonetheless in agreement with the *status quo* in its fundamentals. Others may also be tempted to go along insofar as they find it impossible to conceive of an alternative, and are bound in conscience by the very sincere desire to do something. It might not be so thoroughly tragic if it had not all happened before.

Ireland's history and its struggle for freedom is an apt enough analogy for our current circumstances. Generations of Irish patriots continued to fight the set-piece battle of the European style, without the means to do so. Thus, they allowed the enemy to set the nature, place and conditions of the fighting. It is surely not surprising then, that the struggle was an epic of failure. It makes no matter that scattered among the debris were many individual and common examples of extraordinary heroism, when that courage was wasted on a strategy which from the outset had no real prospect of success. Yet so imbedded in the mind of Irish nationalists was the notion of fighting as the British fought that, even down to 1916, they went out in the knowledge of certain failure. Then as now, we gave the enemy that priceless weapon of war, *our respect*, when no such respect had been earned; equally, we sought to win their respect in equal measure. In consequence, we met them on their terms and inevitably lost. ***We earned nothing for the sacrifice, but their continued derision and scorn.*** In the years that followed 1916, however, the struggle began to be fought in a new way, a way which was inconceivable to the enemy and almost impossible to come to grips with. Within a few years, and with considerably fewer involved than on several previous occasions, the nationalist foot was placed firmly in the door of Irish freedom.

It is something we must think about now. If parliamentary politics is the contemporary set piece battle of the European style, it is of the nature, place and conditions of fighting chosen by the enemy. We grant the Liberals a fatal weapon in

having so much respect for them as to try to win theirs. They have not earned it. Their ideology is more than unpalatable. It is murderous, usurious, pornographic and depraved. Their methods are treacherous, malevolent and immoral. In combating them as Catholics, we must begin to think about what is the contemporary equivalent of political guerrilla warfare. *To the objection that it has not been done before, I answer that many things have not been done before, but they are not for that reason impossible.*

There are three elements to all successful revolutions: economic incentive; the abandonment of the Establishment by a significant number of intellectuals; a powerful social myth. In this context, three additional things need to be noted. The creation of the economic incentive is almost always outside the hands of revolutionaries, and consequently predictable only in terms of form, timing and severity. The abandonment by the intellectuals need not be anywhere near total. It is more a question of providing the revolution with its own internal, philosophical robustness than a weakening of the Establishment as such. The term “myth”, in this context, is not meant to indicate that it is untrue in itself, but rather that it carries more emotional strength than the sum of its facts.

As to the first, it is abundantly clear that the conditions of economic incentive are not present in Ireland today. Certainly, there is a general distaste for the political culture in this country with its repeated corruption and scandals, followed by tribunals, followed by more corruption, scandals and tribunals. This does not, however, amount to real discontent as such. Broadly speaking, the Irish people are satisfied with the state of the nation’s economy. After all, this is the era of the vaunted Celtic Tiger. Though the political class is not receiving any credit for this as an achievement, it exists nonetheless as an effective block on the desire for fundamental change. This much is reflected in the manifestoes of the traditionalist parties, who have failed to undertake a serious analysis of the fault lines of the current boom. They have pretty much taken on board the notion that the boom is genuine and real, whilst any doubts concerning its longevity remain unarticulated in any meaningful way. It may be true that material prosperity ought to be peripheral to our understanding of the state of the nation, but real politik says otherwise. When people perceive their own circumstances to be improving, it is these other concerns which remain peripheral.

However, the fault lines in the boom do not require articulation in order to exist, and there is very little of substance to the Celtic Tiger economy. Any real successes are inflated by such things as fraudulent money, transfer pricing and calculations, based on percentages and proportions of fluctuating and unreliable indicators, such as GNP or G.D.P. and their various ratios with other equally malleable figures. More basic, however, is the extent to which the Irish economy has failed to develop internal grounding, and is committed and consequently subject to global market trends. Without delving too deeply into a complex area, it must be obvious that not every country in the world can run a trade surplus simultaneously. It follows that someone somewhere runs a deficit for our surplus and for the surpluses of any other country which runs its economy in this way. Japan and Red China are currently the most striking examples. It should be equally obvious that countries running such deficits can only do so through debt financing and, consequently, cannot do so

indefinitely. The United States currently carries the largest weight on behalf of the continued functioning of voodoo economics, as do the countries of the Third World to a lesser extent. In the case of the U.S., it will in the coming years either follow the advice of Pat Buchanan and others and engage in economic nationalism, dubbed "*America First*", or ultimately fail to sustain the ability to prop up the system. Either way, the game is very nearly up. How many years it has left to run is anyone's guess. It rather depends on how long the ideology of free trade and the global market, as expressed through GATT, NAFTA and EMU among others, survives after its premise has expired. The crucial point is not the timing, the where and the when, but rather the 'if' and 'how' - questions which are essentially settled. We are likely to have the whole situation monstrously complicated by such fundamentally unsound experiments as Monetary Union.

There are other complicating factors as well, but since this article is not primarily about economics, this is not the place to elaborate. Suffice to say, the economic incentive for revolutionary change not now present will reach the national and international agenda more forcefully than any previous upheaval. We are reaching the crisis of Capitalism expounded in national terms by Marx - although he was only drawing out what Catholic commentators had said long before him - but delayed by globalism. Collapsing too will be much of the orthodox assumptions that go with it. The grave danger arises that while it will be a revolutionary atmosphere *per se*, there is nothing to suggest that the upheaval might not come from the Left.

This brings us to the area which lies very much within our control, but which has been sorely neglected by the traditionalist parties heretofore. It is certainly true that the onset of the crisis is near impossible for the mass of people to grasp in conceptual terms, and will only be felt when it is literally upon them. It is not necessary, however, that it needs to remain hidden from more far-seeing individuals. There is every reason to suppose that a conceptual analysis of the fault lines of current orthodox thinking can be made understandable to a reasonably large group. Though it is somewhat facetious to mention Marx in this regard, thoughtful and reasonably erudite Catholics will be aware that the main themes - as well as some of the more obvious solutions - here have been elaborated by such intellectuals as *Hilaire Belloc*, *G.K. Chesterton*, *Arthur Penty* and *Father Denis Fahey*. We are fortunate too that the outlines of the problem have been expounded at length by the Church, thanks to such admirable Pontiffs as Leo XIII, Pius X and Pius XI. A firm intellectual grounding, particularly as it relates to the moral and spiritual aspects ignored by materialist philosophies, has already been laid. Thus we have at our disposal, a more holistic framework from which to draw the answers to questions which have not yet been asked. The practical issue before us is whether, in the time remaining, it is ourselves or the ideologues of the Left who have prepared the ground most thoroughly for the political battles of the twenty first century. The frightening fact is that almost no work has been done in this area at all. Given the general framework of the Church's philosophical and moral rejection of the capitalist ethic, Catholics themselves have rarely given much thought to the matter, preferring to "*go along to get along*".

Any political movement, which has sought short term advantage in ignoring inevitable developments simply because these are either not palatable to the electorate or understandable to themselves, will be tainted by their association with the failed ideas with which they went along. What we need to do, first and foremost, is to build a movement on the intellectually solid ground of the Church's rejection of the capitalist ethic, which eschews such short term advantage. We must keep our eye firmly on the longer term salvation of the Nation. It may well be that certain Catholic themes have a resonance with the public at large, but it is equally true that they have lost completely a Catholic conception of society as such. More significantly, many even traditionalist Catholics have lost faith in much of what the Church teaches. The apparent successes of the System have not just fooled liberals, but probably a great number of traditionalists as well into believing that Church's social doctrine is dated. The absence of any useful documents, since the Vatican Council, has been instrumental in reinforcing this.

We need to clear our heads of the Liberalism, which we ourselves have so freely imbibed in recent years: notions of religious liberty; notions that only parts of the Church's teaching are practical; notions that the Mystical Body of Christ could have been wrong about anything, anywhere at any time; and most pernicious of all, the oft heard "*right to my opinion*". **Error has no rights**, as St. Thomas Aquinas put it. We need to teach ourselves again the Catholic Faith, deepening and broadening our knowledge and commitment. No-one, not even traditionalist priests, are exempt, though they have always had over us the advantage that they know this already.

We need to gather the intellectual leadership of the new movement around these solid ideas, and through careful and deep thinking elaborate the application of the universal truths of the Faith to modern practical problems. We must constantly expound purely Catholic answers to such problems, presented either personally or politically, even when the truth of those answers is not immediately apparent. Through such methods, we will surely not gather a huge number and worse still (in some people's view), it is not a recipe for electoral success. Yet when the time comes, when modernist political thinking flounders on its own internal contradictions, and people are searching in panic, we will have the foundation intellectually, which can be a real vehicle for the Catholic renaissance which is chased like a shadow by the C.S.P. and National Party.

We need to gather public speakers, writers, materially and spiritually thoughtful persons, activists of all kinds, in whatever numbers are possible. For the moment, number is not the primary issue, but character, talent and political acumen are. In short, those things which are so absent in the inchoate movement today. We will need people, who are willing to make sacrifices, real sacrifices, not whining about minor disruptions of their pleasant, bourgeois lifestyles. This group, howsoever small or large, must enter the mainstream associations with a view to winning new recruits and, if not permeating them with Catholic ideas, then at the very least making it known as widely as possible that this alternative exists.

Necessarily, these persons must follow the dictum of being *in* the world but not *of* the world. They must strive to take as little part in the system as is practicable in their individual capacities. It is simply not possible to place oneself in revolutionary reaction to a totalitarian régime, such as Liberalism, while playing an active role in the

support structure of the régime. It isn't possible, for example, to argue credibly against usury while working in a bank. If that is uncomfortable, it remains a fact nevertheless. It follows too that it is impossible to fight the principle that majorities determine Truth, and place one's hopes for implementing the principle on the back of parliamentary politics.

This whole area requires greater elaboration than is possible here, but it is the idea that is the important thing. In all the various associations, political parties, trades unions, etc., the government must be confronted with Catholic ideas, articulated intelligently by Catholic intellectuals of varying ability perhaps, but always of single purpose. When the time comes when disenchantment with the Establishment has reached crisis, the National Opposition - us! - must have laid the intellectual groundwork, ideological and organisational, to present clearly the Catholic alternative; and be ready to take on what will inevitably be a renovated Hard Left.

Cumulatively this amounts to political guerrilla warfare. It is fought on ground unfamiliar to our opponents, the realm of grand ideas and vision for shaping the future, not only of our own generation but generations ahead. It is not to be found in the mire of party political hackery. By its nature, it is relatively inexpensive in the beginning, since activism amounts more to effort by the individual to convince and convert, rather than broad catch all campaigns. While there is no intention to create a secret society or anything like it, the simple fact is it will be hard to pin down the source of the trouble from the government's point of view. Their problems will be arising in many different types of organisations - everything from a re-invigorated pro-life movement to the trades unions and beyond. The reflective observer will note the similarity with the Gaelic League Movement of the last century, out of which grew the intellectual forebears of the freedom struggle. It bore its fruit decades after the conception. The League first cultivated the idea of Nationhood and from it arose the practical means, in men and materials, to implement it.

As to the last element, it is in its essentials already with us, needing only its modern resurrection to give it corporeal form. Here I am speaking, of course, of Republicanism. Through all the decades since the War of Independence, Irish people have maintained a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards this phenomenon, but it has, through all its permutations, remained for many the only authentic expression of Irish Nationalism. Those who have held the mantle, especially since 1969, have managed to do a lot of damage to it, and with it, the cultural underpinnings being abused to advance the socialistic leanings of the current Sinn Féin. With the advent of the Northern Ireland Assembly, however, the overwhelming hollowness of their thinking will become apparent. Indeed, it is doing so already. Nationalism is giving way to talk of the "equality agenda" and other such nonsense. The Marxist credentials of that party will become increasingly well known. There is a little observed fact about Republicanism, which is that while in retreat it has often fallen into the hands of the ideologues of the Left, while on the rise it becomes potently Catholic in thought and rhetoric. In other words, when abandoned by Sinn Féin, in word as well as deed, the Republican mantle belongs to the force with the strength and conviction to take it.

Under the heading of Republicanism, important concepts can be developed - such as a proper Constitutionalism, with a view to restricting forever the rampant

ideology of government for its own sake. In truth, Republicanism is more properly a traditionalist conception, though this has become confused by the misuse of the term within the Irish and European contexts. The modernisation of the idea, to encompass what is now clearly the real struggle with Imperial forces, namely European federalism, gives new focus to the underlying cultural predisposition towards the movement. The Irish people will have an opportunity to throw aside the ambiguity, which has been fostered by the occasional monstrous acts carried out in its name, and embrace a Republicanism for the twenty first century. It is a rallying standard of both emotional and practical appeal, which only the most poorly formed political mind would ignore.

As traditional Catholics we are, all of us, aware of the deep moral and spiritual malaise into which the nation has sunk. Many of us have a burning desire to do something about it before it is too late. Understanding this is both a religious and patriotic obligation. However, we are caught as usual between those who really don't intend to do anything of substance, preferring instead to ramble endlessly in idle chatter about how bad everything is, and those whose desire to act will lead them to any action whatever. Party political activity is superficially attractive, because it is familiar. Most of us understand the basics of how to go about it. On this ground alone, it seems the thing to do. It is, if you like, the obvious thing to do. Yet if it is so obvious, can we not pause a moment to consider that the Liberals, in formulating their agenda, must have taken our reaction into account and discounted the risks on the basis that this was almost certainly what we would do? If they, who have so much to lose, don't think it will work why do we?

The prescription outlined briefly here is a daunting task, most especially since it has never been undertaken in modern times. In some senses, it has never been undertaken at all at any time. The territory is essentially new, and we will have to feel our way forward in developing the new tactics for the new strategy. But just as surely as we have never done it before, the Establishment has never faced it before. ***Their problems will be a magnification of ours.*** If it appears to be a hopeless task, then it need only be remembered that when the forces of moral and cultural decay beheld the majesty of organised Christendom, it must have seemed to many of them an impossibility to overthrow. They suffered equally disheartening setbacks, but never once did their core cadre doubt or question their perceived rightness of cause; nor did they waver one scintilla from the dogmatic promulgation of their principles. Today, they are frightenly close to success. Our advantage lies in the clearness with which the consequences of their endeavours can be observed; maybe just before it is finally too late. The guiding principle must be to do away with all illusions. The task is not the winning of votes, but of hearts, minds, and hands. One man at a time; one woman at a time; one child at a time. Only thus will we build a Movement and, with that Movement and through that Movement, build the Republic: ***Catholic, Gaelic, and Free.***



RECOMMENDED READING.

This book cannot hope to deal with every subject mentioned in great depth, though there is a great deal more that could be said. It is for this reason that a *Recommended Reading* section has been appended. It will allow the interested reader to seek out those books, which will allow him to deepen his knowledge of the current state of play, and thereby assist in the resurrection of Ireland.

Those books marked with an asterisk are - as of writing - available from the author. If you would like more information, kindly send a stamp addressed envelope or International Reply Coupon to our address.

- The Guild Alternative* - Arthur Penty.*
The Party System - Hilaire Belloc.*
The Servile State - Hilaire Belloc.*
Usury - Hilaire Belloc.*
The Restoration of Property - Hilaire Belloc.*
Economics For Helen - Hilaire Belloc.*
The Outline of Sanity - G.K. Chesterton.*
My Life with Thomas Aquinas - Carol Robinson.*
The Mystical Body of Christ and the Modern World - Fr. Denis Fahey.*
Small is Beautiful - Fritz Schumacher.*
Good Work - Fritz Schumacher.*
How the Irish saved Civilization - Thomas Cahill.
Rerum Novarum - Pope Leo XIII.*
Quadregesimo Anno - Pope Pius XI.*
Michael Collins and the Brotherhood - Vincent McDowell.
The Path to Freedom - Michael Collins.
The Irish Counter-Revolution 1921 - 1936 - John M. Regan.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Justin Barrett was born in Cork in 1971. Married with 2 children, he received his Business Studies Certificate in 1990. In 1991, whilst studying at the Athlone Institute of Technology, he received his Business Studies/Management Finance Diploma, following this up with his Part Qualified (Stage 2) Chartered Institute of Management Accountants qualification in 1992.

Whilst studying, he took an active part in student politics. In November 1990, he was a delegate to the Special Constitutional Conference of the *Union of Students of Ireland* (USI), and he was a candidate for Union Development Officer in 1992.

Prior to this, however, he had been active on behalf of the Irish national interest. He was a member of the *Constitutional Rights Campaign* in 1986, which fought the slavery of the Single European Act, as well as of the Munster offshoot, *People First - Meitheal*.

In 1987, he got involved with *Family Solidarity*, believing that the attack on the Family, coming from the liberals in the Irish media, was undermining Ireland in a very serious and substantial way. This experience led him to the conviction that political action needed to be taken, so he joined *Young Fine Gael*, becoming Press Officer for the Borrisokane Cumainn of YFG between 1989 and 1991.

Realizing that the Party System was wholly inadequate for redressing the many and deep problems of Ireland, he quit Fine Gael and joined *Youth Defence* in 1992. He had already been involved with the *Pro-Life Campaign* in Ballinasloe, but the nationwide impact of the X Case pushed him towards national involvement.

In 1995, he was the Chairman of *Youth Against Divorce*, and became the Public Relations Officer of Youth Defence in 1998, a post he still maintains. He has been a speaker on many platforms in the last 10 years or so, both in Ireland and abroad, and has been committed to active work against the enemies of Ireland.

A practising Catholic, he takes his cue from the authentic Social Teaching of the Catholic Church.



Does Ireland have a future? The question might seem incredible in the light of the much vaunted "Celtic Tiger", but the question is serious nonetheless. It is serious, because it takes account of the realities of the situation - realities that can be discovered by anyone prepared to spend the time looking - and ignores the fanciful reports of an unintelligent journalism.

Is Ireland a Republic? Again, the question might seem incredible in light of the fact that there is a Parliament at Leinster House, but the question is serious nonetheless. It is serious, because the existence of a Parliament in Ireland does not mean that a Republican government is in existence. A Parliament is not a Republic, whatever the fanciful reports to the contrary of an unintelligent journalism.

Is Ireland a Catholic country? Yet again, the question might seem incredible in light of the fact that virtually everyone in Eire proclaims themselves to be Catholic, but the question is serious nonetheless. It is serious, because numbers on a census form do not make a country Catholic except in the most superficial way, whatever the fanciful reports to the contrary of an unintelligent and anti-Catholic journalism.

Is Ireland really Irish? Once again, the question might seem incredible in light of the fact that virtually the entire population is of Irish blood, but the question is serious nonetheless. It is serious, because mere blood does not make the sum total of Irish Nationhood - there is the spirit, consciousness, culture and way of life to be added in - whatever the fanciful reports to the contrary of an unintelligent and profoundly anti-Irish journalism.

The fact is that in spite of the 1922 Treaty, which gave the Irish *"the freedom to achieve freedom"*, the Irish Nation has become less Irish with every passing decade. It has got to the point where the very definition of Irishness is in the balance. If you doubt that, imagine what the heroes of 1916 would make of contemporary Ireland. What would they think of a people which had largely abandoned the Land, when for centuries the Irish had struggled to regain it? What would they think of a people which had largely lost the ability to speak their own Language, when for centuries the Irish had fought to preserve it in the face of bitter persecution? What would they think of a people who had largely lost the capacity to Sacrifice, when for centuries the Irish had sacrificed without limit to preserve the Good and the True? What would they think of a people who had ceased to believe and act upon their ancestral religion, when for centuries the Irish were renowned throughout the world for their devotion to the Catholic religion of Jesus Christ?

Would they not look in horror at the shadow that Ireland and the Irish had become? Would they not grieve that *"the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of Nationhood"* had been cruelly betrayed?

This book tells us *how* and *why* we have come to this sorry pass. It tells us *who* brought us here and *why*. It tells us what we have to do if Ireland is to regain its Irish identity in all its glory. *It tell us of our need for an Ireland, Catholic, Gaelic and Republican.*

The National Way Forward

Justin Barrett

The Guild Press